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# Leaders and Landmarks in European History

A ROMAN TRIUMPH

F. W. W. TOPHAM, R.I.

# Leaders & Landmarks in European History

*From Early to Modern Times*

By A. R. Hope Moncrieff

AUTHOR OF "THE WORLD OF TO-DAY", ETC.

& The Rev. H. J. Chaytor, M.A.

TRANSLATOR OF FERRERO'S "THE GREATNESS AND DECLINE OF ROME", ETC.

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*In Four Volumes*

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## Volume I

*From Early Times to the Rise of Mohammedanism*

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A ROMAN TRIUMPH. From the painting by F. W. W. Topham, R.I., R.O.I., in the Leicester Art Gallery.

Crowned with a laurel wreath, and holding a laurel branch in his hand, the victorious general was borne through the city in a chariot drawn by four horses. Behind him stood a public slave holding over his head a golden crown, who ever and anon whispered in his ear "Respice post te, hominem te memento" (Look behind thee; remember thou art mortal!). His children under age rode with him in the chariot or on the horses, and his grown-up sons came behind.

Mr. Frank W. W. Topham is a modern artist, born in 1838, whose work is prominently represented in the permanent collections at Manchester, Liverpool, and other centres. This fine example from his brush is reproduced by permission of the Corporation of Leicester.

# Publishers' Note

The purpose of these volumes is to present a gallery of biographical sketches, illustrating the main course of European history by the lives of men whose names are generally recognized as its high lights. Such is the underlying scheme on which the book is based; but as some momentous movements have no single hero, the strictly biographical form is not always adhered to. For instance, in rapidly surveying early epochs, as also in dealing with such a prolonged series of events as the Wars of the Crusades, it has seemed best to abandon the biographical form. But the rule has been to choose some outstanding personality as representative of his age, if only in the fortune that gave him a principal part to play. By glances backward and forward the lives have been connected, as far as possible, so as to lead the reader on from one landmark of history to another.

It is believed that these sketches and historical surveys will thus afford an interesting panorama of successive periods and drifts of tendency, through which the European nations have developed from barbarism to their present state. References, sometimes with extracts, have been introduced to contemporary chroniclers and other sources of information, whence a willing student may seek to fill in the outlines here presented, while all readers are helped to views of the historic past more moving and instructive than can be supplied in the limits of a mere textbook.

To expedite the work it has been entrusted to two writers, who are responsible respectively for the first and second portions, the natural line of division here being the discovery of America, and the pregnant development of what may be called the modern mind. The first two volumes are written by Mr. A. R. Hope Moncrieff, whose name will be known to many

readers as author of *The World of To-Day*, which surveyed mankind in space, as this book in time. The two latter volumes are from the pen of the Rev. H. J. Chaytor, whose work as translator of the later volumes of Ferrero's *The Greatness and Decline of Rome* has brought him deserved distinction.

To render the work as widely useful as possible an Appendix is added to each volume consisting of a Chronological Conspectus and a Summary of the Great Movements of European History, the former prepared by Mr. Walter Murray, the latter by Mr. F. Harrison, M.A.

The illustrations are from a wide variety of sources. The collections of public Galleries and Museums of Britain and the Continent have been drawn upon to provide representations in colour and in black-and-white of historical paintings and of subjects of historical and archæological interest. Historical maps, in colour, are freely supplied.

# Plates in Colour

## VOLUME I


Page

A Roman Triumph - - - - - - - - - *Frontispiece*

From the painting by F. W. W. Topham, R.I., in the Corporation Art Gallery, Leicester.

An Audience in Athens during the Representation of the Agamemnon - - - - - - - - - - - 26

From the painting by Sir W. B. Richmond, R.A., K.C.B., in the Birmingham Art Gallery.

The Family of Darius at the Feet of Alexander - - 40

From the painting by Paolo Veronese in the National Gallery, London.

Cicero denounces Catiline before the Senate - - - - 84

From the fresco by Professor Maccari in the Palace of the Senate, Rome.

Julian the Apostate presiding at a Conference of Sectarians - - - - - - - - - - - - 140

From the painting by E. Armitage, R.A., in the Walker Art Gallery, Liverpool.

Attila on the March - - - - - - - - - - 152

From the mural painting by J. E. Delaunay in the Pantheon, Paris.

The Chariot Race - - - - - - - - - - - 160

From the painting by Professor Alexander Wagner in the City Art Gallery, Manchester.

A Caravan of Pilgrims on the Way to Mecca - - - 196

From the painting by Léon Belly, in the Louvre, Paris.

# Black-and-White Plates

## VOLUME I


Page

HAMMURABI'S "CODE OF LAWS" - - - - - - - 8

RELICS OF ÆGEAN CIVILIZATION - - - - - - - 14

Winding stairway, Palace of Knossos, Crete; Bronze shield from the cave of Zeus on Mount Ida; Jar, with sphinxes (Greek type) in relief.

THEMISTOCLES; PERICLES; ÆSCHYLUS; SOCRATES - - - 24

THE BATTLE OF ISSUS, 333 B.C. (Mosaic picture from Pompeii) 38

ALEXANDER THE GREAT - - - - - - - - - 44

ROMAN INFANTRY AND CAVALRY (from a bas relief) - - - 58

HANNIBAL'S ARMY CROSSING THE RHONE (from painting by Henri Motte) - - - - - - - - - - - 64

HANNIBAL; PUBLIUS CORNELIUS SCIPIO AFRICANUS - - - 70

MARIUS; SULLA; POMPEY THE GREAT; CICERO - - - 80

CAIUS JULIUS CÆSAR; CLEOPATRA; MARK ANTONY - - - 88

THE FAMILY OF THE CÆSARS (Sardonyx cameo) - - - 104

AUGUSTUS CÆSAR - - - - - - - - - - 108

THE TRIUMPH OF TIBERIUS (Sardonyx cameo) - - - - 112

THE TRIUMPH OF TITUS (from a bas relief) - - - - 112

TRAJAN'S TRIUMPHAL ARCH, BENEVENTUM - - - - 120

ANTONINUS PIUS; MARCUS AURELIUS - - - - - 124

THE PONTE MOLLE, ACROSS THE TIBER, NEAR ROME - - 134

THE PORTA NIGRA, TRIER (TRÈVES) - - - - - 134

CONSTANTINE THE GREAT - - - - - - - - 138

PEDESTAL OF THE OBELISK OF THOTHMES III, CONSTANTINOPLE 146

THE BAPTISM OF CLOVIS (from mural painting by Joseph Blanc) 156

# Black-and-White Plates

Page

TWO OF THE FAMOUS RAVENNA MOSAICS (Sixth Century) - 164
Upper Panel: The Emperor Justinian with the Bishop Maximilian and Attendants. Lower Panel: The Empress Theodora with the Ladies of her Court.

INTERIOR OF ST. SOPHIA - - - - - - - - - 172

MONASTERY OF MONTE CASSINO - - - - - - 176
The Prior's Cloister; the Sanctuary of St. Benedict.

GREGORY THE GREAT - - - - - - - - - 180

THE KAABA, MECCA - - - - - - - - - - 190

THE KORAN (A printed copy as used at the present day) - 190

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# Maps in Colour

ANCIENT ORIENTAL MONARCHIES - - - - - - - 4

GREECE AND HER COLONIES - - - - - - - - 16

THE PERSIAN EMPIRE: THE WORLD WHICH ALEXANDER CONQUERED - - - - - - - - - - - 36

ROME AND CARTHAGE IN THE 1ST AND 2ND PUNIC WARS - 62

THE ROMAN EMPIRE AT THE DEATH OF JULIUS CÆSAR, B.C. 44 96

THE ROMAN EMPIRE AT ITS GREATEST EXTENT, 2ND CENTURY A.D. - - - - - - - - - - - - 130

EUROPE, SHOWING BARBARIAN AND BYZANTINE EMPIRES 520 A.D. 154

# VOLUME ONE

## CHAPTER I

## The Twilight of History

Manifold are the materials of history for those who can interpret all the signs of man's presence on earth, now dated back through centuries to be counted in hundreds, if not thousands. One English archæologist has lately shown cause to suppose Neolithic man as chipping flints from 200,000 to 300,000 years ago, and that Drift man may date back to a million years. Thus anthropology calmly deals in guesses that would have been received with stares and gasps by the boldest speculator of last generation. The discovery of radio-activity has lately gone towards bridging over a wide gap between the calculations of physicists and of geologists on this dim stretch of time, which any day may be lit up by new illumination thrown upon it in the advance of science. What we can take for certain is that enormous periods have elapsed since *homo sapiens* began to adapt nature to his wants, preceded by longer epochs in which he must have been developing to that point from lower forms of sentient life. So all the era we know as history seems but a moment of dawn brightening on the edge of an inconceivably vast darkness, in whose shadow man makes a first purblind attempt to count his yesterdays.

Older than tradition, and more truthful, is the silent testimony of bones, stones, tools, weapons, ornaments, pottery, heaps of emptied shells, foundations of ancient homes, that come to be unearthed as an alphabet for the Muse of History's spelling book. Like an Indian hunter on the track of game, science can now follow early steps in human progress, from mere dull brutality to the sharpening of flints and the pointing of stakes, from callous nakedness to the comfort of fire and the decency of clothes, from the Stone Age to the Bronze, from the Bronze to the Iron, from wandering bands to warlike tribes and to settled nations, and on through a long story of man's mastery over his environment and over his own nature. That story is still a broken one, full of puzzles not pieced out, and but blurredly illustrated by the arts and customs of peoples still savage or barbarous, which are yet the best documents from which the present age can study the course of the past. Here and there, as a beacon in the darkness, stands out some

time-defying tomb, some ruined city, some Cyclopean fortress of forgotten chiefs, some discovery of buried treasures or stores of a vanished civilization. Then we come upon enduring inscriptions, from the first rude scratchings on bone or stone, that record the primitive quarrel of man and beast, to sunless galleries sculptured or painted with the emblems of long-silent religion and the triumphal processions of kings marching to dusty death.

Before writing came speech, spread out in such a tangle from towers of Babel. We have a clue to the roaming of our Aryan forefathers in familiar words common to their tongue, such as that root *ar* that has ploughed their name in so many soils. Even numbers yield a hint of history, as when we investigate the origin of a week of seven days or of a thousand-paced mile. Words and names indeed are seldom so trustworthy as humbler evidences, since it is easier for man to change his speech from Semitic to Aryan than his skull from long to broad, or to cast his skin, white, black, brown, red, yellow, as it comes to him from long descent. In his childhood words are soon woven as myths; then we need not despise those first stammering guesses at his origin and environment; so the science of folklore essays to put "old wives' tales" in their place as lessons from the nursery days of the human mind.

The earliest spoken history is legend, in which some reflection or distortion of truth looms like a Brocken-spectre through the mists of ages. All over the world, we can understand how some Prometheus hit out sparks of fire, some Triptolemus or Hiawatha taught his people to plant the seeds of corn, some storm-tossed Ulysses wandered to wondrous climes, or some lusty Jason brought back a Golden Fleece from far-off perils; some Cadmus followed his cattle to a promising settlement; some herd, watched by Argus-eyed dogs, was stung to flight before Juno's gadflies, as reindeer are driven wild in Lapland to-day; some monstrous plague or wave sent by Neptune might devour an unhappy land. Among tribes whose very names are now unknown, a Hercules would not be wanting to tame monsters and wildernesses; a Bellerophon often may have bridled Pegasus to ride forth against fearsome Chimæras; a winsome Paris would steal a dusky Helen; a fierce Achilles was like to quarrel over the booty with an arrogant Agamemnon, whose deeds might be sung by some Orpheus able almost to cheat death by his strains. In all epochs some Balder the Beautiful has fallen by mean chance; doughty Siegfrieds have slain dragons of the slime; the wrangling of Criemhilds and Brunhilds has been washed out in brave men's blood; the sun god has sent arrows of pestilence upon besieging camps; Jove has overthrown the order of Saturn, as he of his father; a pitying Gautama has come down from his princely state to share and comfort the miseries of common men.

Poets see our first forefathers feeding on roots, acorns, and the like, in which they may not be so far out as in other features of their Golden Age "that never was on sea or land". Nimrod appears active very early in history, equipped as a mightier hunter when Tubal Cain comes

to his aid. Hunters and fishers, always in danger of chronic starvation, like the Red Indian tribes up to our own time, are goaded upon bold adventures of travel and discovery. They settle down upon fields which their squaws can sow and reap, while the braves earn spells of idleness by strenuous raids upon lurking beasts and neighbour men. They tame and rear cattle whose peaceful grazing may be cause of strife, as arose in Canaan between the servants of Lot and Abraham when the land was not able to bear all their flocks, as has arisen between the feeders of sheep and cattle in Western America of our day. When flood or drought frustrates men's labours, they set forth in search of fresh fields and pastures, perhaps again stirred by mere childish restlessness, perhaps by the guilt of a son of Adam flying from the ground cursed by his brother's blood. Where it is given them to fatten sleek and slack in ease, their welfare offers a temptation for the hardihood of needier hands to oust them; or they grow so numerous as to press one another into a roaming for new homes on favoured soil, which may have to be won by the wholesale robbery and murder of war.

On a first glance those prehistoric ages seem buried in darkness. But as in the death-like silence of the tropical forests, Humboldt notes how one has only to put one's ear to the ground to catch a murmur of multitudinous life, so that obscurity of the past yields to patient attention a confused hum of longings and hopes, of mournings and exultations, of wooings and birth pangs, of feasts and frays, all faintly in tone with the fuller voices we hear around us—

> With the pulse of manly hearts;
> With the voice of orators;
> With the din of city arts;
> With the cannonade of wars;
> With the marches of the brave;
> And prayers of might from martyrs' cave.

The modern seer, who thus finds that what is now was in the beginning, suggests how the course of history may all along have been the same. "The battle of patrician and plebeian, of parent state and colony, of old usage and accommodation to new facts, of the rich man and the poor, reappears in all countries and all times. The war rages not only in battlefields, in national councils, and ecclesiastical synods, but agitates every man's bosom with opposing advantages every hour. On rolls the world meantime, and now one, now the other gets the day, and still the fight renews itself as for the first time under new names and new personalities." Emerson is speaking here of civil war; but did not all war begin as between Cains and Abels in the cradle of civilization, marked as mere brutal quarrel till the sons of Ham, Shem, and Japhet fell out by calculation over their different allotments of blessing?

Down to our own day, it is human bloodshed that has dyed the web of time with its patterns most striking to the eye; and historians have been more apt to dwell on those glowing strands than on the ground-

work of arts by which man conquered nature. But war itself helped to quicken and spread such arts, till they gained power to overlay the crimson of slaughter and the purple of state. One of them is of pregnant importance in our theme. When man advances to written records, and observed measurements of time, we can lay aside the lamp of archæology and ethnology to peer into the twilight of history.

That the name of being the oldest country in the world is borne by Egypt may be due to the dryness of a climate in which even death could long be tricked of decay. Its imposing monuments and the inscriptions on its rock tombs filled the eye of Herodotus with wonder, for ages remaining merely wonderful till by modern research they could be interpreted into annals. The Father of History, for his part, noted how Egyptians lived with "less labour than any other people", thanks to the irrigation of the blue-tinted Nile, which still annually fertilizes their country with a turbid flood, thickening and darkening into blood-red as it swamps the scorched fields to coat them in black mud, soon to be green with the promise of a golden harvest. The cultivated land, thus summer by summer redeemed from the desert, is but a strip, widening about the river's sluggish mouths into the triangle of the Delta, an a ıa which at this day supports a thicker population than any part of Europe, and seems once to have been still better inhabited.

This people were of a type markedly resembling the fellahs of to-day, in spite of all the infiltrations or deposits of colonizing and conquest that must have modified their blood; but here we are to remember how climate may modify a racial type, as in a century or two the American immigrant seems to take on some of the features of the Red Indian. They worshipped various gods, often represented with the heads of animals held sacred among them. Prominent in their Pantheon were the trinity of Osiris, Isis, and Horus, and the ancestral sun god Re or Ra, as Ammon afterwards fused with Zeus in the ram-headed figure of Jupiter-Ammon, whose desert oracle was visited by Alexander the Great. A confused mythology seems to have early been moulded into form at the sacred city of Heliopolis, seat of a priesthood with elaborate rites and an art of sacred hieroglyphics. Painting and carving were practised among them, especially in connection with the tombs of the dead that now yield us such treasure in memorials of that distant past. The Egyptians, in their sunny climate, lived much under the shadow of death and of a judgment to come, a dread against which they strove by means of costly tombs, enclosing records and representations of life along with the bodies embalmed by rare skill, those mummies unearthed by thousands to stir thoughts half-solemn and half-ludicrous in our time.

> Perchance that very hand, now pinion'd flat,
> Has hob-a-nobbed with Pharaoh, glass to glass,
> Or dropped a halfpenny in Homer's hat,
> Or doff'd thine own to let Queen Dido pass,
> Or held, by Solomon's own invitation,
> A torch at the great Temple's dedication.

John Bartholomew & Co., Edinr.

I need not ask thee if that hand, when arm'd,
Has any Roman soldier maul'd and knuckled,
For thou wert dead, and buried, and embalm'd,
Ere Romulus and Remus had been suckled:
Antiquity appears to have begun
Long after thy primeval race was run.

Animals, too, were mummified; and a cemetery of sacred cats has in our time been shipped off to make manure in Europe, where once the dust of the Pharaohs was used as a drug by physicians perhaps less learned than the wise men who rivalled Moses and Aaron. We owe more to rich men's anxiety to leave behind them some shadow of their earthly life. Mausoleums dating thousands of years before our era contain paintings and other evidences of arts and industries which must have been developed through previous ages of education out of savagery. Little more than a century ago, Champollion's patient study of the tri-lingual inscription on the celebrated Rosetta Stone gave a key to the interpretation of hieroglyphic script; and other relics have since disclosed their secrets so far that we have now a dim and broken outline of Egyptian history for some 5000 years B.C.—a millennium before the date our grandfathers accepted for the creation of the world. Much earlier, in all likelihood, the Nile made "a natural bridge across the great African desert", by which the peoples of Asia and Africa could encounter and mingle with each other.

The countless kings whose names are often lost in the title of Pharaoh can be divided into not less than twenty-six dynasties, overthrowing and replacing each other from the time when the country appears as united under one ruler having his capital at Memphis, down to its being conquered by the Persian Cambyses in the century before it was visited by Herodotus. Else forgotten kings built for themselves world-famed monuments in the Pyramids, a word that seems to be of Egyptian origin, implying a structure with sloping sides. About seventy of these are found along the Nile, the two most imposing groups being to the west of Cairo and a little farther south near the site of Memphis. Higher up the river the European winter settlement of Luxor adjoins Carnak on a plain that was site of the "hundred-gated Thebes", Egypt's most famous capital, four thousand years ago a galaxy of magnificent palaces and shrines, many of which still stand in impressive ruin, after serving as early Christian churches and decaying into dens for Arab goatherds. The great Temple with its Hall of columns and sculptured scenes from Egyptian history is held the noblest monument of the Nile. On the opposite bank are other gigantic temples and subterranean sepulchres of such monarchs as here erected two colossal sitting statues, one of which is known by the name of Memnon, the fabulous hero that came to the aid of Troy. Structures like this and the massive pyramids point to a considerable advance in science and art, as also to the cheap labour of a submissive population, from time to time recruited by the slavery of captive neighbours. At

Memphis, a little above the opening of the Delta, where the flooded Nile was restrained by a dyke as far back as the First Dynasty, are sarcophagi so heavy that modern engineers shrink from the task of moving them. There were quarries at hand in the hills edging the river valley, but some tall obelisks were hewn out of the granite of Assouan, where one still lies defying a railway to carry it away. It is difficult to understand how could be transported such masses as make the Sphinx of Gizeh, 140 feet long; the obelisk of Heliopolis, that sacred city where Moses may have learned the wisdom of the Egyptians; and the colossal statues of Memphis. The Step Pyramid here, if not the Medum tower farther south, appears to be the oldest building in the world. The Great Pyramid of Cheops, the largest of all, belonging to the Fourth Dynasty, is said by Herodotus to have taken the labour of 100,000 men, replaced every three months, for thirty years.

One marvel extolled by Herodotus above the Pyramids no longer exists, the Labyrinth, an extraordinary agglomeration of temple chambers, reputed as thousands in number, through which only the initiated could find their way. This was built in a hollow of the Fayoum province, filled, under the Twelfth Dynasty, by the artificial reservoir of Lake Mœris. The Labyrinth, like the Great Pyramid, was at least cased in white stone, but may have been mainly brick, which would account for its disappearance along with such works as embittered the bondage of the children of Israel, mentioned as building two "treasure cities" for their tyrant, on a larger scale than is suggested by the "Treasury of Rhampsinitus" in one of the tales picked up by Herodotus. This king's name looks like Rameses II, the best commemorated of the Nineteenth Dynasty, figuring about B.C. 1300, who was perhaps confused with his predecessor Seti to make the Sesostris of Greek legend; and he or some other of that line has been taken for the Pharaoh who had to let the Hebrews go. The first coming of Joseph into the land is supposed to have been at the end of a long period of subjection to a line of "shepherd kings", who were eventually overthrown by native princes; then it might well be said that "every shepherd is an abomination to the Egyptians". Wandering tribes like the children of Israel must often have strayed within the borders of this rich region, to settle in its Goshen purlieus, where, if not protected by some favouring prince or vizier, they would be liable to share the slavish lot of captives made in war. Those shepherd conquerors have been guessed at as the Hittites who figure dimly in the background of very ancient history; but such a sketch as this must eschew matters of controversy.

We cannot here go into all the shadowy vicissitudes of a power "decomposing but to recompose", with repeated changes of lords, of fortune, and of bounds, now pushing conquest beyond its borders, now suffering disastrous invasion, now shifting its capital from the edge of the Delta to upper Egypt. Its most glorious period appears to have been in the Nineteenth Dynasty, when the line of Rameses II built the great temples at Thebes. After that came a period of rebellion

and confusion, Egypt being now threatened by encroaching neighbours. Rameses III, the last of the great kings, is said to have beaten back an invading "sea people", perhaps the Pelasgi, the ancient stock of Greece, whose name may possibly be akin to those of Palestine and Philistine. Now grew up the cities of the Philistines, held in check by the kingdom of Saul and David; and to the north flourished the Phœnician sea-power on the coast of Tyre and Sidon. Many wars had filled the armies as well as the slave gangs of Egypt with foreign soldiers, whose leaders mutinied to split up the kingdom into a score of princedoms. Another usurpation had been carried out by the high priests of Ammon, who, failing to found a permanent theocracy at Thebes, took refuge in the subject province of Ethiopia, where they established an independent state so strong that its rulers more than once invaded Egypt and Syria. Before being finally driven back to the south in the eighth century B.C., they had come into collision with the conquering might of Assyria, that burst like a scorching simoom upon Palestine and Egypt. By this time, also, both war and commerce had brought the Greeks into connection with Egypt as with other shores of the Levant.

As commerce naturally spread on landlocked seas, culture would first flourish along rich river valleys. On the flat soil deposited by the Euphrates and the Tigris another Asiatic people had grown to no mean degree of civilization, possibly older than that of the Egyptians. In the southern part of this region a people known as Chaldeans or Babylonians won fame at least five thousand years ago for the astronomical science of their priests or sages, founded upon observations of long date. They were also notable for controlling and spreading the waters of their great rivers with such skill that this dry country, under its present apathetic masters tending to relapse into a wilderness, could then support a very large population. They cultivated wheat, built towns, worked in metals, and had a cuneiform writing stamped upon clay tablets. The alluvial plains, still being pushed out by the united rivers into the Persian Gulf, gave them a poverty of stone that forced upon their sculptures the economical form of bas-relief. Most of their constructions had to be in brick, so that the cities of Babylon have literally "become heaps", and their secrets lay longer hidden than in the case of the Egyptian antiquities. Assyriology, the branch of learning that deals with the antiquities of Babylonia and Assyria, is little more than half a century old, its lessons still being spelled out by scholars more enterprising than the Ottoman lords of the land.

These plains are taken to be the Biblical "Land of Shinar", where Nimrod was a mighty hunter before the Lord, and where the city of Accad (*Genesis*, x, 10) has given its name to a supposed Accadian stock, perhaps Turanian, overlaid by a "black-headed" people of another family of mankind named Semites. Shinar has been sometimes identified with the lower and richer part of the converging valleys, where towns might grow up in a cluster rather than as strung along the narrow strip fertilized by the Nile. Two regions are doubtfully dis-

tinguished under the early names of Accad and Sumer. In any case both these names were swamped under repeated waves of migration, apparently from Arabia, that land fertile in bold men, who have so often overflowed on to more favoured soil. One branch of the Semitic stock increased and multiplied as the Hebrews, after their forefather Abraham wandered southward from Ur of the Chaldees. Of the same stock were the Babylonians themselves that came to dominate Mesopotamia. The Deluge, the Ark, and the Tower of Babel appear in their sacred records, handed down through a priestly caste, to whom perhaps the name of Chaldees properly belongs, but it has also been interpreted as "conquerors". To their Magi, wise men and priests of the "high places", whom ruder minds naturally took for magicians, we seem to owe the distinction of the constellations, the signs of the Zodiac, the five planets, and the measurements of the year, brought to Europe by the Greeks and widely applied in the nautical enterprise of the Phœnicians.

It appears that various towns were here united into such a theocratic kingdom as that of Ur of the Chaldees. Among many unknown kings the name of Gudea is preserved by an inscribed stone statue, and that of Sargon by a legend that, like Moses, he was in infancy exposed in an ark of reeds launched upon the Euphrates. Over two thousand years before our era, there flourished at Babylon the great king Hammurabi, who could boast that he had united all the country under his rule, and turned its deserts into fertile land by a canal bearing his name. That name has come to wider fame as affixed to the oldest code of laws extant, discovered at the beginning of this century by a French excavator at Susa, to which a mutilated record of them had been carried off as trophy by a Persian conqueror. This is now treasured in the Louvre, at Paris, best memorial of a king who declared that, when his god Merodach made him governor of men, "Right and Justice I established in the land for the good of its people".

Tablets in the British Museum give fragments of the same code, which, based as it may be on older laws, makes a most interesting document not only by its correspondences with the laws of Moses, but as proof how far, so long ago, man had risen above the savage. Besides dealing with crimes and main questions of morality, Hammurabi legislates on such matters as the rent of fields and gardens, the wages of tradesmen, the ransoming of prisoners, inheritance, and dowries. He provides for a relief from debt caused by failure of harvest, against harsh distraint, as upon oxen needed for ploughing, for damages claimable from the man who neglects to keep his stretch of a dyke in repair, for the regulation of wine sellers. He goes into so minute detail as the fees of doctors and veterinary surgeons, and punishments are prescribed for the profession in cases of malpractice. Judges, too, are liable to pay twelvefold costs if they can be convicted of judging wrongly. Jerry-builders and other dishonest craftsmen are threatened with penalties which might prove a salutary addition to our own laws.

Photo. Mansell

HAMMURABI'S "CODE OF LAWS"

Basalt Stele from Babylon, discovered in the ruins of Susa: now in the Louvre, Paris.
On the upper part the king is seen receiving the Laws from the Sun God.

If a builder has built a house for a man, and his work is not strong, and if the house he has built falls in and kills the householder, that builder shall be slain.

If the child of the householder be killed, the child of that builder shall be slain.

If the slave of the householder be killed, he shall give slave for slave to the householder.

If goods have been destroyed, he shall replace all that has been destroyed; and because the house that he built was not made strong, and it has fallen in, he shall restore the fallen house out of his own personal property.

If a builder has built a house for a man, and his work is not done properly, and a wall shifts; then that builder shall make that wall good with his own silver.

If a boatbuilder has built a 60-ton boat for a man, he shall give him two shekels of silver for his pay.

If a boatbuilder has built a boat for a man, and his work is not firm, and in that same year that boat is disabled in use; then the boatbuilder shall overhaul that boat, and strengthen it with his own material, and he shall return the strengthened boat to the boatowner.

If a man has given his boat on hire to a boatman, and the boatman is careless, and the boat is sunk and lost; then the boatman shall replace the boat to the boatowner.

If a man has hired boatman and boat, and laden her with corn, wool, oil, dates, or any other kind of freight, and if that boatman is careless and sinks the boat, and her cargo is lost; then the boatman shall replace the boat he has sunk and all her cargo that he has lost.

If a boatman has sunk a man's boat, and refloated her, he shall give silver to half her value.

The first articles of the code denounce sorcery and perjury. Slavery is recognized but regulated. Drowning figures as a capital punishment. Corn and silver appear as currency in which fines are to be paid. The conclusion is a string of resounding curses against whoever shall neglect or alter the laws of Hammurabi.

The list of cities enumerated as subject to him shows this king's dominion extending from the mouth of the rivers up to Nineveh on the Tigris, a name that was to overshadow that of his own capital, Babylon, on the Euphrates. To the north of Babylonia a more hilly country was held by a sturdier race of the same blood, from whose chief god, Assur, they got the name of Assyrians. At one time subject to Babylon, they became independent, then in turn dominant. Greek legend makes Ninus the first king and founder of Nineveh, succeeded by his warlike widow Semiramis, who built Babylon and other monuments of her prowess, as her husband's was the pyramid belittled as "Ninny's Tomb" in the *Midsummer-Night's Dream*. A more authentic hero was Tiglath-Pileser, who, in the twelfth century B.C., carried his conquests from the Persian Gulf to the Mediterranean and the Euxine. The kingdom waned, but waxed again into the most formidable power of the East, when it claimed tribute from Ahab and Jehu, as from Tyre and Sidon. It was usurped by a second Tiglath-Pileser, who in the

eighth century subdued the kingdoms of Syria. Another usurper, Sargon, soon afterwards returned to overrun Samaria and Judea; and his son Sennacherib again came down "like the wolf on the fold" against Hezekiah and Jerusalem, when an Assyrian army might be equipped with battering rams, towers on wheels, and such devices for reducing walled cities that could foil hosts of naked barbarians. Sennacherib's successors conquered Egypt for a time, along with neighbouring countries; but their vassals were able to throw off the yoke, and at the end of the seventh century Nineveh was destroyed by the Medes and Babylonians, who partitioned its territory between them. Assurbanipal was Assyria's last great name, perhaps perverted in the Greek story of a luxurious king, Sardanapalus, so effeminate as to dress in woman's garb and handle the distaff like Hercules under the spell of Omphale; but when pressed by his foes he rose to fight with the old spirit of his fathers, and, all being lost, had himself burned on a pile along with his wives, slaves, and treasures.

Babylonia, having thus regained its independence, presently under Nebuchadnezzar grew again to the pitch of power shown in our Bible story. Palestine lay as a battlefield for his army and that of Egypt. More than a century before, Samaria had been taken and colonized from Babylonia. Now Judea paid tribute; but when its king turned for help to Egypt, the Babylonians took Jerusalem, carrying away Jehoiachin with the flower of his people. Her conqueror made Zedekiah king, who presently would have shaken off the yoke, seeking a fresh alliance with Egypt; then Nebuchadnezzar's army swooped back to destroy Jerusalem after a long and desperate resistance; and the survivors were led off, to sing the songs of Zion in a strange land during seventy years' captivity.

The ravages of Nebuchadnezzar were said by the Greeks to have extended as far as the Pillars of Hercules, the Straits of Gibraltar, that for them ended the known earth. At home he made Babylon the most magnificent city of its time, a type of hateful pride and power for the oppressed exiles of Judea. Famous was his palace, with its hanging gardens that counted among the Seven Wonders of the ancient world. The city, laid out on both sides of the Euphrates, extended over the plain for leagues within its fortifications, where now it is represented by shapeless mounds and wrecks of the brickwork that has gone to build the squalid town of Hillah. Herodotus, who saw Babylon more than a century after its day of glory, still took it for wonderful, but he ascribes its construction to two fabulous queens, Semiramis and Nitocris, as if the memory of Nebuchadnezzar were already dim. In the eyes of oppressed Israel he figures more clearly as having restored the heathen temples, notably the tower of Bel that was such an offence to Jehovah's worshippers. It is told that in punishment for his proud misbelief this great king went mad for a time, and "was driven from men, and did eat grass as oxen, and his body was wet with the dew of heaven"; but he recovered his senses on owning the Most High, and came to be re-established in his kingdom. Under his successor, Evil-Merodach,

the head of the captive king Jehoiachin "was lifted up" and the exiled Jews seem to have gained favour in Babylon. But soon an overwhelming storm would burst upon its glory.

Now came to the front a new power that had been growing up in Iran, the modern Persia, whose fire-worshipping people were of our own Aryan stock, pressed between the Turanian hordes of Central Asia and the Semitic nations of the western corner. Three parts can be vaguely distinguished here: the country of the Medes in the north; that of Elam beside the Tigris on the west; and in the south the wild fastnesses of Persian mountaineers, who would come to mastery over the whole region. The Medes were for a time supreme, and had aided the Babylonians to overthrow Assyria, taking as their share of the spoil its north-eastern territory down to the Tigris. They pushed their conquests into Asia Minor, where they were arrested by the power of Lydia, that had risen among or beside the seats of that ancient people the Hittites, whose inscriptions are still undecipherable. The story goes that a great battle was brought to a stand by the first recorded eclipse of the sun (B.C. 585), which so amazed both armies that the kings of Lydia and Media made peace on terms that the Halys, central river of Asia Minor, should be the frontier between them.

But the Medes began to decline, as other nations in their day of greatness. The hardy Persians mastered Elam or Susiana; then about the middle of the century, under the hero Cyrus, of whom such romantic tales came to be told, they rose against the dominant Median king, and took his capital, Ecbatana. Cyrus became lord of the whole country, fixing his seat at Susa or at Persepolis, where stately structures still display the ruin brought upon them by Alexander the Great. Through the conquest of Lydia he came in touch with the Greek cities of the Ionian seaboard, by which, later on, Persia would be drawn into its long war with Hellas. He next assailed Babylon, entering the city, a legend has it, by turning aside the waters of the Euphrates so as to make its bed a way for his soldiers. He subdued also Afghanistan and Turkestan, so as to bring under his sway all the countries between India and the Mediterranean. These vassals he appears to have treated considerately, sparing their kings and respecting their worship in a new humane spirit that went to consolidate his widespread dominion. The captive Jews he allowed to return to Jerusalem and rebuild the ruined Temple, towards which their eyes had been turned through that long exile. Not all of them cared to return, many having grown rich in the commerce of Babylon, so it was but a poor people that resettled itself in Judea under the government of the High Priest. Henceforth, but for an interval of independence under the Maccabees, the Jewish state was a vassal theocracy, clinging under various masters to its far-spread faith.

Cyrus fell obscurely (529 B.C.) in an expedition against the Scythians of the steppes. His son Cambyses, a prince of less noble temper, was able to conquer Egypt, then was brought to a stand in the desert when

he advanced upon Ethiopia. His short reign ended in usurpation and revolt; but the Persian Empire was restored and consolidated by Darius, who handed down to his descendants the title of "The Great King", their power, unrivalled in the East, extending into Europe when it broke against the valour of the Greek commonwealths.

Such are the most marked figures and scenes flickering out in the twilight of history, against a cloudier background that hides the birth of tribes and nations whose names may be now unknown, or who may have wandered thousands of leagues from their original seat. It has been guessed that the same Accadians as are caught dimly moving about the Tower of Babel, found their way across Asia to China, which puts forth a doubtfully authentic history of nearly five thousand years, a past perhaps to be extended and illuminated by the new spirit opening the eyes of that land to its present condition. The late Emperor of Japan understood himself to be the 121st of his line. The climate of India and its archipelago have not so long preserved such monuments as we find in Egypt, yet there too we catch hints of immemorial antiquity. The sleepy islands of the Pacific hide traces of vanished civilization, overgrown by rank greenery and shunned by the superstition of the inhabitants. Who erected on Easter Island that mysterious show of elaborate sanctuaries, of colossal images, of rocks carved into sphinx forms, that question us with such stonily silent faces? The megalithic ruins of Tiahuanaco in Bolivia are even more mysterious, as reared at nearly the height of our highest European mountain, where under present climatic conditions even a small population finds life hard; they have been taken to be as old as the Pyramids, while a more sober estimate dates them from nearly 4000 years ago. The buried cities of Yucatan, already decayed and overgrown at the time of the Spanish Conquest, offer another labyrinth to archæologists, out of which one American writer finds his way by boldly suggesting that the Maya Indians were the original Magi of Chaldæa, and brought their pyramidal structures from the Gulf of Mexico to Egypt: thus America would invert any claim of her dependence on the Old World! If the inscribed records and emblems of this region come to be deciphered like those of the East, who knows what story they may have to tell? But it may be that all search for man's cradle is vain, if it were in some forgotten Atlantis whose monuments have long sunk into silent depths of sea.

From these imaginations we turn to fix our eyes on that corner of islanded sea where the Muse of History first found her harp on Mediterranean shores, and the springs of European civilization appear tinged from Egyptian and Asian soil.

## CHAPTER II

# The Hellenes (1500–336 B.C.)

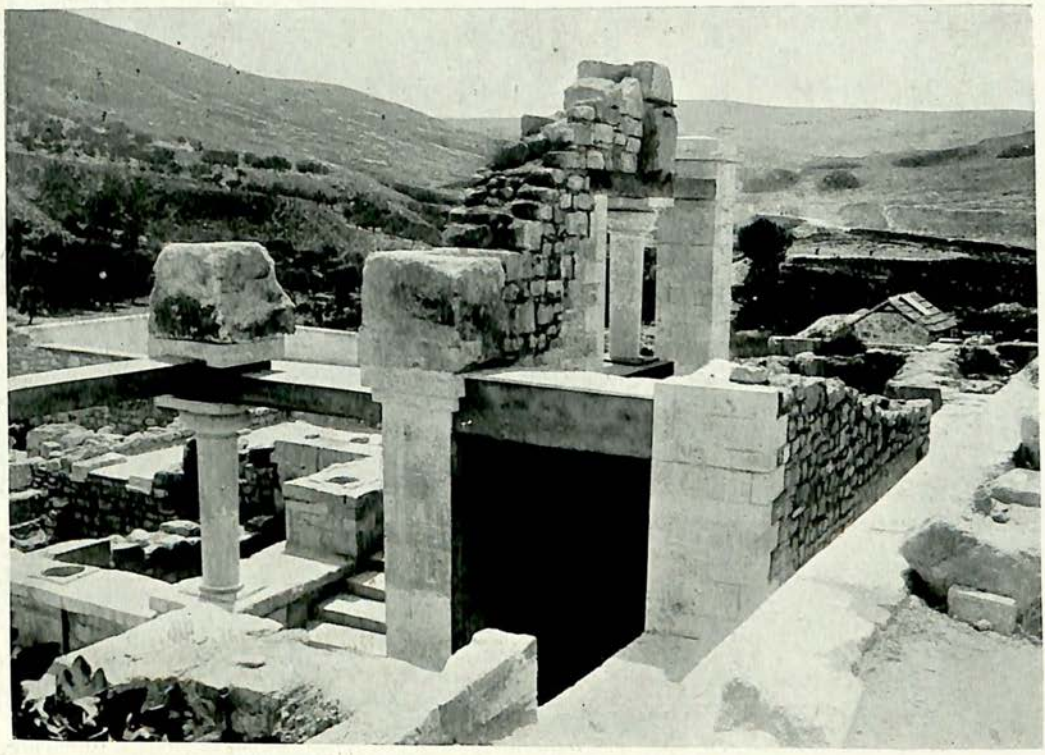
Within the last twenty years or so the horizon of European history has broadened by as many centuries, thanks to the excavations carried out round the Ægean Sea by the German pioneer Schliemann, then by Sir A. J. Evans and other scholars of different nations. The first point on which a new light rests is the island of Crete, that made a natural stepping stone for the civilization of Syria and Egypt to pass over to Greece. Here, since the beginning of this century, archæological discoveries at Knossos and elsewhere have revealed the flourishing of a trading and industrial race, ruled by a dynasty of sea-kings who bore the generic name of Minos, as their contemporaries in Egypt were Pharaohs. It is uncertain how long this race had been seated in the island, but remains of their buildings and other relics show that three thousand years before our era they had reached a state of culture implied by a system of writing, unfortunately still undecipherable, by pottery, sculpture, inlaid metalwork, gem-carving, among various ornamental arts. In their religion, as in their economy, the bull seems to have played a prominent part, so as to become as it were the crest of the state, figuring also in various mythical legends that have Crete for their scene. The huge rambling palace now unearthed at Knossos, not far from the present chief town, Candia, may well have shaped the Greek fable of a famous labyrinth made by Dædalus for the Cretan kings; then in the story of Theseus and the Minotaur we seem to have some hint of an actual tribute laid upon a city of Greece by this powerful neighbour. It is notable that whereas, in the legendary history of Athens, Minos appears as a cruel oppressor taking vengeance on the city for the slaughter of his son, in general Grecian mythology he presents rather a character for austere justice, so as to be set as judge over the souls in Hades. "Thus it seems ill", says Plutarch, "to earn the hatred of a city great in eloquence and poetry."

By means of their wealth and maritime power the kings of Crete must have long held a dominant position at this end of the Mediterranean. Their rule seems to have reached its zenith about 1500 B.C., and then to have fallen; there are signs of a sudden attack against which in their pride and easeful security the lords of Knossos stood unprepared; or civil war may have ruined the rich state. Belonging to this epoch, traces of a less-advanced people have been turned up at Mycenæ, and other points of Argolis, the north-eastern promontory of the Peloponnesus, where the remains of fortresses so massive as

to be attributed to Cyclopean hands still bear witness to the prowess of heroes before Agamemnon. Here, then, may have been the landing place of civilization on the mainland of Greece; and at this corner of it, after Crete's decay, must have flourished a notable Grecian state in what is now known as the Mycenæan Age. It is possible that, when Macedonia and Thrace come to be more thoroughly explored, we may find there the relics of some forgotten city, once as great as Mycenæ, which itself appears to have overlain other settlements in the same region.

On the ruins of that Ægean civilization arose the first historic nation of Europe, whose origin is still shrouded in mists of controversy. The race among which was hereabouts developed a common language and religion must have been one as mixed as our own. Long-headed and broad-headed, fair and dark, tall and short warriors struggled together for graves on this soil long before it became classic. A stock named Pelasgians, taken to be *autochthonous*, "sprung from the soil", were overrun by successive invasions, themselves perhaps holding out in mountainous fastnesses, while elsewhere more or less completely absorbed among the conquerors. Immigrants from Asia, Africa, and the islands, like the fabled Cadmus, no doubt brought letters, arts, and commerce to this much-indented shore: the Ægean culture shows plain marks of Egyptian influence. From the north came by land swarms of Aryan warriors, bringing with them their conception of a male sky-god (*Dyaus*—the Greek Zeus) to wed the female earth-spirit of a ruder mythology, a union that engendered the religion of Olympus, with its Twelve Great Gods taking shape above such a primitive jungle of "Gorgons and hydras and chimæras dire" as savage imagination evokes for worship or propitiation. This religion we find almost full grown in the writings attributed to Homer and Hesiod, who early in the millennium before our era were able to use a national language. The fact that Homer was taken to be born in the Asian island fringe shows how this race, pent up in the narrow and not over-fruitful bounds of the Grecian peninsula, had been launching forth to transplant its language and its culture on the opposite shores, an enterprise that went on till the Mediterranean and the Euxine, as far as the Crimea and Trebizond to the east and the mouth of the Rhone to the west, were dotted round with Greek colonies, through which a constant intercourse of ideas and clashing of interests would be kept up with western Asia and northern Africa.

The fabulous story of Jason's expedition to Colchis in search of the Golden Fleece is probably a poetic account of some real commercial or adventurous voyage undertaken by a race called the Minyans, who appear to have drifted into Greece from the north. The tale of Troy seems all the more likely to have had some basis of fact since Schliemann's excavations disclosed that several successive cities had been built, and destroyed, on a site commanding the entrance to the Hellespont, so as to be a natural point of attack for maritime adventurers. The subject of the *Iliad* implies a national consciousness among the



WINDING STAIRWAY, PALACE OF KNOSSOS, CRETE

Bronze shield from the cave of Zeus on Mount Ida

Photos. Maraghiannis, Crete

Jar, with sphinxes (Greek type) in relief



RELICS OF AEGEAN CIVILIZATION

Greeks; while Homer's catalogue of the ships that took part in that famous expedition gives an outline of their political divisions. Its warriors are spoken of as Achæans, taken to be a fair-haired race from the north, probably of Celtic blood, who before 1200 B.C. had gained a wide domination; but their name afterwards shrank within a narrow northern strip of the Peloponnesus. The Achæans, indeed, must have been but one wave of a tide of Aryan invasion, another bearing the name of the Dorians, who pressed south to fix themselves most notably at Sparta. Homer has no other name than Achæan for the nation, unless Argives; and their leader, Agamemnon, is the King of Argos, or Mycenæ, chief cities of what thus figures as still the principal state.

It was soon after Homer's date that the Greek-speaking people recognized themselves as Hellenes, a name explained by a mythical ancestor *Hellen*, as Pelops may have been invented to be godfather for the Peloponnesus, the southern peninsula, that, sundered from the rest of Hellas, might let itself be but slowly welded into the general nationality. Greek legend abounds in such fabulous or shadowy heroes, who, as all over the world, are often connected with the gods. The name Greek, by which the race is known abroad, arose from the accident of a tribe of *Graicæ* being first of the Hellenes to come in touch with the Romans in Italy.

Passing from legend to history, in the eighth century B.C., when Rome took its fabulous origin, we find seated over Greece, and widespread on the surrounding shores and islands, a people known as Hellenes and their land as Hellas, united by religion, to some extent by manners, by a language already capable of high literary achievements, and by a pride that looked down upon all not speaking this tongue as *barbaroi*, whence our word "barbarians". It was divided by dialect into three chief strains: the Æolian in the north, the Ionian in the centre, and the Dorian in the south, all a little intermixed by movements of emigration or conquest, and each claiming descent from a different scion of *Hellen*, taken to be the common ancestor. Through the influence of the great Athenian authors, the chief Ionian dialect, under the name of Attic Greek, eventually became the standard of literary language; and the Ionians appear to have been the most enterprising colonizers and traders, while the Dorians long distinguished themselves rather as warriors.

Political divisions were more minute and complicated, Hellas being cut up into a maze of small states, some of them no larger than a city and its environs, often at feud with each other, apt to be torn by internal factions, their strength waxing or waning with the fortunes of local warfare, sometimes gaining a mastery among their neighbours, but none of them able to win a permanent supremacy over the whole nation. In the palmy days of Greece its states were counted at nearly one hundred and sixty, each with its own laws, its own coinage, its local interests, and its internal factions, whose contentions often turned on the question of war or peace. The area covered by them, not so

large as Scotland, is thus described by Dr. B. I. Wheeler in his life of *Alexander the Great.*

The very fashion of the landscape protests against the vast and huge, and suggests on every hand fineness rather than grandeur, and elaboration rather than extension. The coast line of this Mediterranean Norway represents a perpetual struggle of earth and sea. Narrow gulfs penetrate the land, or miniature bays lead up to pleasant beaches fringing amphitheatred plains. Ragged headlands jut out audaciously into the sea, and lofty peaks descend abruptly to the shore.

The face of the country, too, is like a piece of crumpled paper. It seems as if it had been sought to comprehend the widest superficial area within the least extent. Fertile plains appear in rapid alternation with rugged mountain chains. The plain of Athens stretches back fourteen miles from the sea, but scarcely at any point exceeds five miles in width. The plain of Sparta is a narrow strip of fertile land enclosed by the mountain wall of Parnon on the east, and of Taygetus, reaching to an elevation of nearly eight thousand feet, on the west. So the plain of Argos, and of Tegea, and many another. Some are larger, some smaller, but they all have their history. Wherever in Greece you find a mountain-locked plain, most especially if it open to the sea, there you find the strong flavour of local history. Each has its story to tell, a story of peculiar institutions, peculiar traditions, and a peculiar life. Islands, too, of every size and shape skirt the coast and are scattered in easy proximity to one another over all the face of the sea. From Attica to the southern coast of Asia Minor they form almost a natural bridge of stepping-stones.

For causes of quarrel, these cantons, as they might be styled, rather than states, had ever-ready jealousies, boundary disputes, ancestral grudges, and the restlessness of a youth trained to war. Thus often were snapped the natural ties of union that from time to time might be drawn closer by alliances, by religious ceremonies, and by temporary community of local interests and sympathies or antipathies. Leagues were formed among them, like that known as the Amphictyonic. There were, indeed, several leagues of a name derived from mythology; but one Amphictyonic Council became most celebrated and enduring, which, while specially undertaking to punish violations of sacred territory, used its influence to settle disputes, and so soften the hardships of warfare between its members. Its professed object was the guardianship of Apollo's oracle at Delphi, open to all Hellenes and venerated even by barbarians. Here, in a naturally impressive theatre of volcanic rocks, a priestess intoxicated by inhaling mephitic vapour given forth from a cleft, was understood to speak the mind of the god. His oracles were notoriously cryptic or two-edged, to fit dubious issues; and the local priestly caste that controlled their utterance came to be accused of a leaning to the interest of the Dorian branch, which in time went far to destroy their credit. While other deities were taken as special patrons of certain cities—Athene, at Athens; Hera, at Argos; and Poseidon, at Corinth—the great temples of Zeus made national rallying-points, as did the mystic

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rites most famously carried out at Eleusis, near Athens, in honour of Ceres and Proserpine, who seem heirs of a mythical spirit of vegetation older in worship than the emperor of heaven. But for a people with such a bent for poetic personification, the graciously human attributes of Apollo gave him the heartiest consecration as mediator between earth and Olympus.

The religion of Greece was shaped rather by poets than by priests; and its sacred books were the works of Homer and Hesiod. These poems, as well as others not now extant, were widely published by recitation at the great athletic contests that also drew together Greeks from all corners of their world. Besides local gatherings of less fame, there were four great meetings held periodically under religious sanction—the *Isthmian* Games, on the isthmus of Corinth; the *Nemean* Games, in Argolis; the *Pythian* Games, at Delphi; and the *Olympic* Games, on the templed plain of Olympia, towards the western coast of the Peloponnesus. These last were by far the most important, as a festival at once social, political, and religious, celebrated at intervals of four years; which period, under the style of an Olympiad, was used as a date, the successive Olympiads running from 776 B.C., when the games first appear as fully organized. Their ceremonies lasted for a month, from the first full moon of the summer solstice, when a sacred truce permitted enemies to meet here in temporary peace.

Both place and period were held as sacred, no armed force being suffered to approach. This national truce, indeed, might be disturbed by an old quarrel between Pisa and Elis for the presidency of the meeting, which once, in 364 B.C., came to be broken up by a collision of implacable feuds, turning the games into a battle.

In the athletic contests which filled the first half of the month, all free-born Hellenes might compete; but they were not open to barbarians, a word implying all people who did not speak Greek. "Pot-hunting" and "gate-money" did not corrupt the sport of early days, though something like "professionalism" seems to have been developed. The prize was a simple crown of wild olive; but the winner deemed himself rich in the general applause and in that of his fellow citizens, who hailed his victory as a special triumph for his native state, where henceforth he lived in honour and privilege; and more substantial rewards were not always wanting, while his fame might be embalmed in a statue. The first and chief contest would be the foot-race, followed by wrestling, boxing, hurling the spear and the discus, horse-races, chariot-races, and other exercises, altered or modified at different times. There were competitions for boys only, and at one time a race for girls; but as a rule women were held aloof from the lists. The *pancration* made a medley of boxing and wrestling, and the *pentathlon*, a succession of five separate contests, victory in either of which came to be the ardent ambition of athletes. Nor was personal prowess the only title to fame. Rich men, and magnates of outlying colonies, trained horses for races, where their success gave the owner such pride as comes from possession of a Derby winner. But the excitement of our Epsom or Newmarket faintly reflects the eagerness with which the Greek world fixed its eyes on the contests of Olympia.

The second half of the month was taken up with processions, sacrifices, and such religious ceremonies, ending with a banquet to the successful competitors. During the festival it was customary for authors to read their compositions as at a Welsh *Eisteddfod*; and the History of Herodotus is doubtfully said to have been published in this manner. The huge concourse attracted on such an occasion lent itself, likewise, to commercial dealings, which gave it the character of an inter-State fair. Works of art, also, were exhibited at what made the Greek form of an Exhibition, while such sanctuaries as Olympia and Delphi became permanent museums of national art and history.—*Classic Myth and Legend.*

The constitution of Greek states early showed tendencies towards a popular government. Even in Homer, "the king of men" is no Oriental despot but a chosen leader who feels himself not independent of his warriors and councillors. In many cities, kings came soon to be replaced by republics, often torn by a struggle between an oligarchical or aristocratic and a more democratic form of government, sometimes ending in the temporary domination of a "tyrant", a title that had not its modern implication, but signified a ruler who took his power by force, such a strong hand often offering a welcome relief from anarchy. Ancient democracy, we must remember, was at the best always qualified by a denial of political rights to slaves, aliens, and subject populations; and government would usually be in the hands of a privileged class, large enough to be excitably fickle, not too large for the appeal of rhetorical oratory that found a favourable soil in the public life of such communities. For long the rulers, under whatever name, were what we should call men of family, or men of martial prowess; but by and by glib-tongued demagogues gained perilous influence in many states, most often among the Ionian populations. And always the best-designed constitutions were liable to corruption by wealth and power gathering in the hands of the few, while the many remained poor in circumstances of growing luxury that made a hotbed for revolution.

Stronger authority was more at home in the Dorian States, among which the military organization of Sparta notably favoured a form of government that should have pleased Carlyle. Built upon an inland plain of the Peloponnesus, this city of Dorian conquerors came to supplant Argos as the dominant power of southern Greece. Its peculiar institutions were ascribed to the half-mythical Lycurgus, who, after travelling far and wide to study the laws of other countries, is said to have made his fellow citizens swear to observe in his absence the code which they had invited him to impose on them, then he disappeared, never to release them from their obligation. The Spartan laws, more probably a work of time, present a mixture of democratic socialism and rigid military discipline, aiming at the union of two ideal extremes. There were two hereditary kings, their double rule a check upon arbitrary power, limited also by a senate and a popular assembly, as by five Ephors, or overseers, who in time came to control

the nominal heads of the state as masterfully as the first French Republic's commissioners kept a close hand upon its generals. Under an aristocracy of conquerors lived the original inhabitants, to whom were left the toils of trade and agriculture, as well as a lower class of helots or slaves, so large that the military caste of free citizens had always to be on their guard in what was practically a garrison within frontiers to be defended against neighbouring states. So high was the pride of this Spartan soldiery that they scorned to surround their city by walls, even when warned by repeated revolts of their helotry. Lacedæmon was an *alias* of the city's name, that stood as a citadel for the whole country called Laconia, and for long could hold itself as head of a loose union of the Peloponnesian states.

The laws of Sparta have become a proverb for austerity. From childhood boys were sternly schooled under the lash to bear and dare all the pains and hardships of war. Even after the spirit of this discipline had evaporated, other Greeks saw with astonishment how Spartan lads submitted themselves to a competitive examination of scourging even to death, at the altar of Artemis, their parents standing by to hearten them in silent endurance, as a Spartan mother would send her son to war with the charge not to come back alive unless victorious. Such ordeals resembled the initiations still practised among Red Indian and African tribes, and may have been a survival of some bloodier form of human sacrifice. The public school was introduction to a communistic life in which rich and poor citizens fed together at public tables on the plainest fare, described as "black broth". To discourage luxury, all money was to be of iron, that should have made wealth a burden. Yet the old Adam's heart seems not so easily schooled as his skin, since Spartan leaders often earned a bad name for corruption through bribery. Another point of their manners was a sparingness of speech, recorded in the epithet "laconic". Eloquence was held cheap at Sparta, its sons taught to deal rather in actions than in words. It is told by Herodotus how exiles from Samos, seeking the aid of the Spartans, made a long harangue, to which their hosts gave answer that they could not understand the end of it, having already forgotten the beginning. On this hint the docile visitors brought a sack, and sought to propitiate the *genius loci* by simply declaring that it wanted meal, but still were found fault with for using too many words, since the sight of the empty sack was enough to show that it should be filled.

Eloquence and other arts found a more congenial home in Attica, which took a similar lead in northern Greece, making at once a contrast and a rival to Sparta. Pent up on a promontory, Athens, even when swollen by annexation of small adjacent cities like Megara, dominated a territory known as Attica, less than many an English county, and in her brightest days of glory the population of free citizens was no more than some 50,000; but to their proud and enterprising character she owed a greatness connected by legend with special favour of the goddess Athene. From the rest of northern Greece her site was cut off by

Bœotia, whose people made a proverb for slow-witted rusticity to the self-satisfied Athenians. Besides the great city of Thebes, with its tragic traditions from the heroic age, Bœotia contained several states attempting to stand together in a federated league; but discords and jealousies held them back from crushing that haughty neighbour. Athens found an outlet for its activity in annexing such adjacent islands as Eubœa and Salamis, and in scattering Ionian colonies to more distant points. She was thus the mother of many Asian and Ægean cities and the natural head of any league that might be formed among them. As a rule, where these colonies kept a democratic government they looked to Athens; but when tyrants or oligarchies got the upper hand their interest might turn to well-drilled Sparta for support.

Athens also had its legendary kings and lawgivers. The Acropolis, or citadel, on a hill four miles from the sea, was said to have been built by Cecrops; then Theseus figured as the hero who set it free from tribute, and consolidated the villages of Attica into a kingdom. Codrus had the credit of being its last king, who, in obedience to an oracle, sought obscure death among the enemy for the safety of his people; and their gratitude pronounced no one worthy to succeed him in the title, for which was substituted that of archon, bestowed upon his son, Medon. The archonship ceased to be hereditary, was limited to ten years, and became divided among ten magistrates. A period of something like anarchy seems indicated by the story of Draco being called on to dictate laws that were said to be written in blood, since they punished the least as well as the greatest crime with death. The Draconian code proving too rigid for human nature, a milder legislator was found in Solon, one of those sages remembered as the Seven Wise Men of Greece. His record is for honesty as well as wisdom, since he refused to make himself king, but drew up a republican constitution, settling the government in an upper and a lower council, one popularly elected, the other a senate of experienced magistrates, while justice was to be administered by juries taken from all ranks of free citizens. Tradition represents his laws as favouring trade and industry, as trying to hold a just balance between rich and poor, as even protecting slaves from being treated as cattle, and as a general reform of barbarous customs. Of him, too, it is told that, having made the Athenians swear obedience to his laws, he took himself out of reach of their complaints, spending ten years on travel, in the course of which his famous lesson on the vanity of human greatness was given to Crœsus, the wealthy King of Lydia, along with a pregnant hint that iron would prove stronger than gold. But Solon seems to have died about the beginning of Crœsus's reign, at the end of his life returning to Athens to find dissensions flourishing afresh among its fickle citizens.

We come on firmer ground with the name of Pisistratus, who, as Solon passes from the cloudy scene, appears heading the democratic party against the nobles, then usurping a tyranny of which he made

no ignoble use. He began the adornment of the city afterwards carried out under Pericles; he fostered the drama through which it was to become not less famous; he is said to have had edited and arranged the poems of Homer for recitation at the Panathenaic Games. Twice he was expelled by the nobles, and twice regained the power which he masked under a show of republican zeal. Seeking to propitiate his enemies by moderation, he got rid of one of the most dangerous of them by sending Miltiades to found a colony on the Hellespont, where that exile's nephew and namesake would set up a tyranny of his own, before coming back to save the mother city.

> The tyrant of the Chersonese
> Was freedom's best and bravest friend.

Pisistratus died in undisturbed old age, 527 B.C., handing on his power to his son Hippias, who shared it with his younger brother Hipparchus, accused of sharpening against himself by private injury the swords of Harmodius and Aristogeiton. A popular Greek song still extant tells how these conspirators hid their blades in myrtle branches when a procession gave them an opportunity of assassinating Hipparchus, at the cost of their own lives. Hippias escaped for the time; but his brother's death seems to have provoked him to cruelties that helped on his downfall. The noble family of Alcmæonids, expelled from Athens, came back with a Spartan army, driving Hippias in turn into exile. The Spartan influence was ineffectually used to back aristocracy; but the head of the Alcmæonids, Cleisthenes, became leader of a popular party, and carried democratic measures, among them the famous law of ostracism; by which, writing the accused name on a shell, any citizen could vote for the banishment of whoever seemed a danger to the public weal. Henceforth the government of Athens is a democracy, controlled by variously constituted bodies, and by the fitful ascendancy of some masterful or artful leader, who, without any pretentious title, might succeed in dominating his colleagues like an American "boss". Hippias eventually took refuge with the Persian satrap Artaphernes, whose aid the Athenians themselves had sought to invoke against Sparta; but Persia's interference in their affairs soon gave all the Hellenic states reasons to lay aside their dissensions in face of a powerful enemy.

The Assyrian Empire had split up into two parts—Babylon and the kingdom of the Medes at Ecbatana. The latter came to be seized by a tribe of hardy Persian mountaineers, with Cyrus as their leader, who then conquered Babylon after overrunning Asia Minor. Here the chief state was that of Lydia, whose king, Crœsus, had made tributary the Greek colonies of Ionia. These were by no means rude struggling settlements, as might be supposed from the name of colony. Miletus seems to have been the largest Greek city of that age, when the most famous Greek poets and philosophers had appeared in Ionia, up to the fifth century apparently ahead of Greece proper, so that some writers have taken this region to be the cradle of Hellenic civilization.

But the Ionian cities were too wealthy and commercial, as well as too little united, to stand firm for their independence; and many of them bought peace by paying tribute to Crœsus, who in return seems to have owned the mental supremacy of Hellenism. In his pride, setting himself up against Cyrus, he is said to have consulted the oracle at Delphi, to be deceived by a dubious prediction that if he crossed the frontier River Halys (the modern Kizil-Irmak), he would overthrow a great empire. He attacked Cyrus, was himself overthrown, and with him the Ionian seaports became vassals of Persia.

Cyrus fell, B.C. 529, in a futile expedition against the barbarous Scythians. His son Cambyses went on to conquer Egypt, and was succeeded by Darius, son-in-law of Cyrus, who marched into Thrace and Macedonia. In his army served contingents from the Ionian cities, whose tyrants looked for support to Persia, while its yoke galled the democratic feeling congenial to their citizens. In 502 B.C. a flame of revolution swept along the coast. Several cities and islands got rid of their tyrants and denounced their vassalage. For help against Persia they appealed to Athens, the more willing to espouse their cause when Artaphernes, satrap of Lydia, haughtily required the Athenians to take back Hippias. They replied by an expedition that burned Sardis, but was driven to its ships, leaving the Ionian revolt to be crushed both by land and sea. So began the famous war in which Greece won such proud renown as in our day did Japan by its successful stand against the weight of Russia.

The "Great King", as he was for that age, might well believe himself irresistible, but the forces of nature were too strong for his first attempt to punish Athens by an expedition that came to be wrecked on the stormy promontory of Mount Athos. Yet next year most of the Greeks were fain to submit to his demand for "earth and water" as signs of vassalage. Athens and Sparta, however, answered by putting his envoys to death. Even in Athens there was a Persian party; and even at this moment of peril the Greek states could not lay aside their jealous quarrels. Thebes, for one, was not ashamed to side with the foreigner. So Greece was all unprepared for resistance when, in B.C. 490, the Persians returned 100,000 strong, steering safely from island to island, guided by the traitor Hippias, to land on the plain of Marathon, some twenty miles from Athens.

The Spartans sent help, but, delayed by their superstitious observance of the new moon, this force did not arrive till all was over. The Athenians marched out to meet the foe with only some tenth of its numbers, including 1000 men from the neighbouring city Platæa. Taking post on the hills above Marathon, that little army was like to be paralysed by the leadership of ten generals, each of whom should take command in turn. But a majority of them had the sense to let the bold Miltiades carry out his plan of leading them down to the plain, just as the Persians seem to have been reimbarking with the view of attacking the city by sea. This onset crushed the invading host into a disordered crowd, slaughtered by thousands as they struggled to

gain their ships, which the Greeks tried to set on fire along the blood-stained shore. Of the victors, states Herodotus, less than two hundred fell, buried under a mound that to this day records their prowess. Miltiades hastened back to Athens, for the bulk of the Persian fleet had escaped to threaten the unfortified city. But that first taste of Greek valour was enough for the lieutenants of Darius, who, after hovering for a day or two about the harbour, sailed back to Asia with ill news for their master.

This signal victory stirred the pride of Greece, and raised the standing of the city that almost alone had repelled such a foe. Now came to the front Themistocles with his policy of making Athens a strong naval power. He persuaded his fellow citizens to build a fleet of triremes, for which funds were found in the silver mines of Laurium that had been opened as a rich possession for this state; so when, ten years later, the Persians came back, Athens could take a lead among her maritime neighbours in encountering them at sea.

In the interval Darius had died, leaving his vengeance as a legacy to Xerxes, who, apparently not without hesitation, prepared to overwhelm Greece by an armament of fabulous strength. Our accounts are from patriotic Greek historians, whose interest was to exaggerate the peril that then threatened their land; but, when all allowances are made, the host Xerxes led to Greece must have been an enormous one. It is told how for years he was gathering myriads of men and thousands of ships from his wide domain; how he built a bridge of boats over the Hellespont, and when it was broken by the waves ordered them to be chained and scourged for rebellion to his despotic will; how an army of slaves dug a canal through the neck of Mount Athos that his fleet might elude that perilous point; and how, when he came to review the mighty host, his heart swelling for pride to see the land covered by his soldiers and the sea by his ships, all at once another mood took him, and he burst into tears at the thought that in a few years not one of all those countless warriors would be left alive, nor even himself, hailed by so many as the greatest of kings.

Slow and notorious as these preparations had been, the attack found Greece still unprepared, and not even then thoroughly united. This time the Spartans took on themselves to bear the brunt of resistance. Their king, Leonidas, leading three hundred hoplites, or heavy-armed soldiers, each attended by seven helots, who, with a handful of allies from other states, made up a few thousand men, defended the northern mountain pass, called from its warm springs Thermopylæ ("the Hot Gates"), by which an army coming from Thessaly must squeeze itself round a promontory upon what was then a narrow ledge or sea-washed rock, but has since been extended by a deposition of marshy plain. In such a post they were attacked by Xerxes, after vainly expecting the very sight of his myriads to enforce a demand for surrender. Here the Persian numbers gave no advantage, and the king's "Immortal" bodyguard was driven back with heavy loss. On the second evening of the fight a traitor disclosed to Xerxes a mountain path by which the

Greeks might be taken in the rear. The Phocians that should have guarded it fled when the Persians advanced by night; other allies chose to retire when their peril was clear; but Leonidas, with about 1000 men in all, stayed to be surrounded, and rushed to meet death among the thick ranks of the "Immortals". The story goes that one man only escaped with the news, to be shunned at home as a coward, while the memory of his comrades was enshrined under a monument inscribed: *Go, stranger, to tell Sparta how we died here, obeying her laws.*

The passage of Thermopylæ being clear, the Persian host divided its mass, swollen by contingents from the submitted states of northern Greece. One army made for Delphi, in hope to seize the treasures amassed there; but the god himself seemed to guard his own by thunder and earthquake that drove the assailants into panic-stricken rout. Xerxes led the main body upon Athens, at his approach abandoned by its people taking refuge on the island of Salamis, off which lay the Greek fleet of ships from different states under rival commanders. Themistocles was the leading spirit, who had successfully impressed upon his fellow citizens an old oracle declaring their safety to be in wooden walls; but it was not so easy to unite the captains in a bold attack on the enemy. Some naval encounters had already taken place, from which the Greek ships fell back on Salamis, to be dismayed by the sight of Athens given up to swarms of barbarians for ruin and pillage.

The Peloponnesians were for withdrawing behind the isthmus of Corinth, across which a wall was being thrown up; but Themistocles pointed out how any such fortification would be useless so long as Xerxes was master of the sea. He magnanimously resigned the command to Eurybiades, King of Sparta, and when in their angry councils this king threatened the Athenian with a blow, he is said to have answered: "Strike, but hear me!" When the fleet seemed likely to follow the retreat of the army, Themistocles called craft to his aid, sending Xerxes a message that the Greek vessels meant to escape him by standing through the narrow channel between Salamis and the mainland. The deceived Persian hastened to surround them and to block this channel, in which, as Themistocles had calculated, the very bulk and number of the enemy's fleet put it at a disadvantage against the Greeks thus brought to action on a rough sea. Xerxes, looking on from an eminence, with scribes beside him to record the exploits of his vassals, saw his vast armada entangled in crashing confusion, the brazen beaks sinking each other rather than harming the lighter Greek galleys, that kept charging into the drifting masses, ramming their hulls and shattering their oar-banks till the strait was strewn with wreckage and corpses. A heroine of Salamis (480 B.C.), on the invaders' side, was the Asian queen Artemisia, who, hard pressed in her dashing prowess, escaped by the stratagem of sinking a Persian ship, so that the Athenians mistook her for an ally.

Again Greece had been saved in one day's battle. Next morning

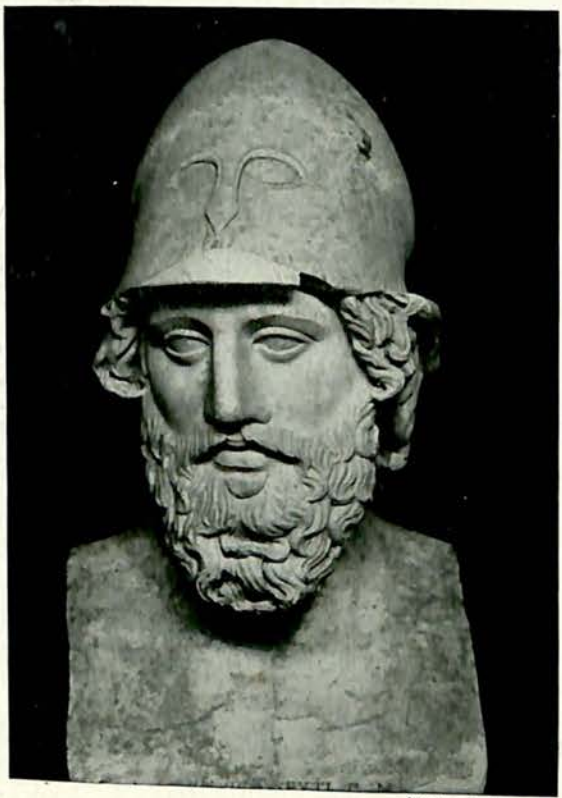
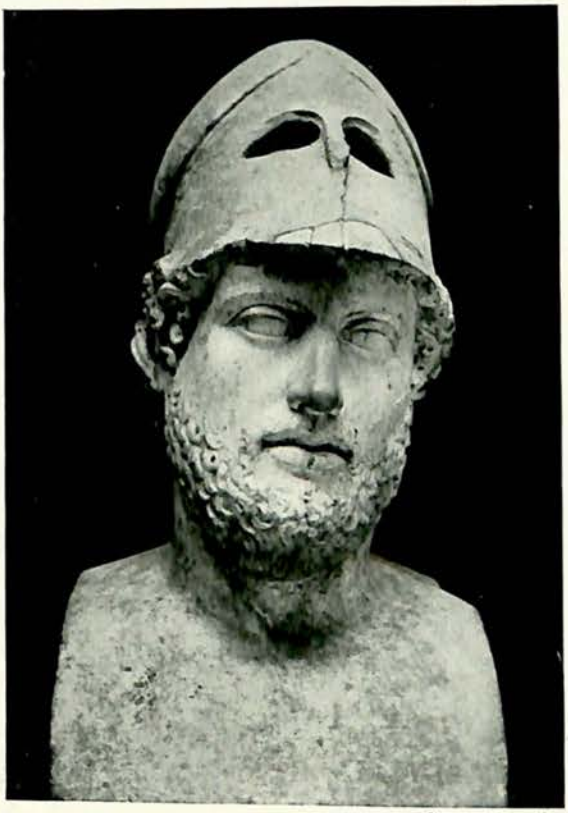


Photo. Anderson

THEMISTOCLES

*Vatican Museum, Rome*



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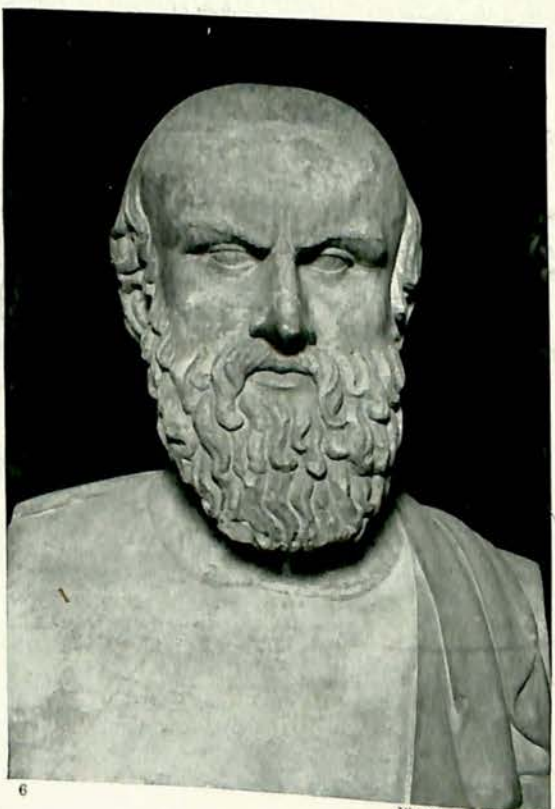
PERICLES

*British Museum*





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AESCHYLUS

*Capitoline Museum, Rome*

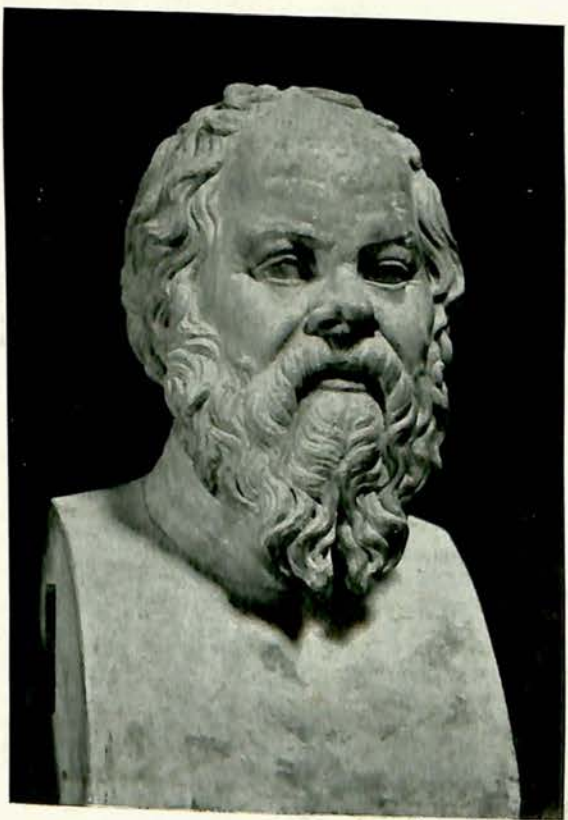


Photo. Anderson

SOCRATES

*Capitoline Museum, Rome*

the remains of the Persian host hove off, pursued by the Greeks, till Eurybiades turned back, rejecting the bold scheme of Themistocles to push on and destroy the bridge of boats across the Hellespont: the cautious Spartan opined that it would be wiser to build another bridge for such an enemy. Xerxes, himself spurred, it is said, by a false warning that his retreat would thus be cut off, hurried homewards by land, having had his fill of war; but he left his general Mardonius with a strong army quartered in Thessaly. Next year Mardonius renewed the invasion, to be overwhelmingly defeated at Platæa by a mixed force, in which the Spartans took the lead. The same year, and, it came to be said, the same day, at Mycale, on the Ionian coast, the allies captured the Persian fleet drawn ashore into an entrenched camp; and here the Athenians were in the front. On the whole, Athens still bore off the honours of this war, and its hero was Themistocles, whose fame would stand higher had he fallen like Leonidas. For later on he lost his character as a disinterested patriot, exiled and taking refuge among the barbarians to whom he had proved such a doughty foe; but he is said to have poisoned himself rather than serve the Persian king against his own countrymen.

His rival, Aristides "the Just", and Cimon, son of Miltiades, succeeded Themistocles as Athenian leaders of a confederate fleet with which Greece took the offensive for the deliverance of the Ionian colonies, a work of years that drove home to the unwieldly kingdom the superiority of Greek soldiers and sailors. Themistocles, in his day of authority, had excited the jealousy of Sparta, by forming a strongly fortified harbour at the Piræus port of Athens. To make surer against Persia there was now formed a league of maritime states, called the Confederacy of Delos, that sacred island being chosen as its centre and treasury of the funds contributed by each member to keep up a fleet. Athens, as the chief Ionian naval power, took in this union a lead asserted so masterfully that after a time the Athenians brought over the treasury to their own city and began to treat the allies as dependents owing tribute in return for protection. Forcing backward vassals to join the league, and sending out fresh colonies to spread her fame, Athens quickly grew to be the head of a great sea power, while conservative Sparta, crippled for a time by a servile war at her doors, held back from an enterprising policy that did not stick at attacking Persia so far off as Egypt.

So now, in the middle of the fifth century B.C., came the noonday of Athenian glory, the age of Pericles as it is called, from the statesman who, by flattering and soothing democratic susceptibilities, made himself for a generation practically sovereign of Athens. In the first half of his ascendancy he proved a successful general by land and sea, and having thus won a period of wealthy ease for the city, he devoted himself to its strengthening and adornment. The fortified enclosures about the Acropolis he connected with the Piræus by long walls, behind which an army could encamp. He caused to be built the noble temples and other public buildings that made Athens a wonder of the world and

a model for future ages. In this work his chief agent was Phidias, the greatest sculptor and statuary of ancient times. Other arts flourished under his patronage, notably the drama that at Athens was developed from a rude chorus attending a religious ceremony, into a statuesque representation of heroic scenes and moving events, graced by song and dance. Æschylus, the first great tragedian, fought at Marathon and at Salamis. His rivals, Sophocles and Euripides, belonged to the next generation, in the latter days of which Aristophanes burlesqued Euripides and mocked at Socrates, who had Plato and Xenophon among his pupils. Every freeborn Athenian learned to read and write as part of a careful education that laid great stress on music and gymnastic exercises, through which the youth was trained to serve the state as a disciplined soldier. The great philosophers of Greece had hitherto appeared in Ionia, whence they spread over the Hellenic world a spirit of enquiry into the nature of things, while also a wave of religious enthusiasm brought fresh elements into the popular faith. The legendary name of Orpheus is connected with mystic doctrines that seem to have appealed to pious natures; and late in the sixth century the Samian Pythagoras, settled in Southern Italy, was unfolding new conceptions of duty and destiny, apparently drawn from the East. The vulgar still trembled before stocks and stones; and bold warriors would long be, or affect to be, superstitiously concerned about omens and rites. But now, at Athens, moralists were hard put to it to apologize for scandalous stories told of Olympus; tragedians, like Euripides, dealt boldly with unedifying legends; and philosophers, if they professed to honour the gods, fixed their minds rather on ideas of the godlike. In one generation the Greek mind appears taking an extraordinary leap of evolution, marked by the transition from the uncritical survey of Herodotus, "father of history", to the masterly work of Thucydides, who, born a dozen years or so later, achieved what is still a copy for our historians.

The history in which he was both author and actor, has for its main subject the great Peloponnesian War that undermined the political greatness of Athens, ripening to decay beneath such a show of glory. Her democracy, restless and ungrateful to its leaders, bore itself imperiously towards its dependencies, cruelly crushing the revolts into which they were driven by its exactions. Its maritime rivals, Ægina and Corinth, looked askance on this swollen power. Sparta, strong by land as Athens by sea, never forgot the old grudge of Dorian against Ionian. So, in the last days of Pericles, when he found his mastery harder to hold, broke out the long struggle (432 B.C.) that, with short intermission, went on for a generation, to ruin Athens and weaken all Greece, while the power of Persia once more waxed formidable, as the hostile Hellenic communities were fain to turn to their old enemy for support against each other, so that the Peloponnesian War may be styled a national suicide.

A clear account of this celebrated struggle would make a long story, so confused were its events and so changeable the policy of the states

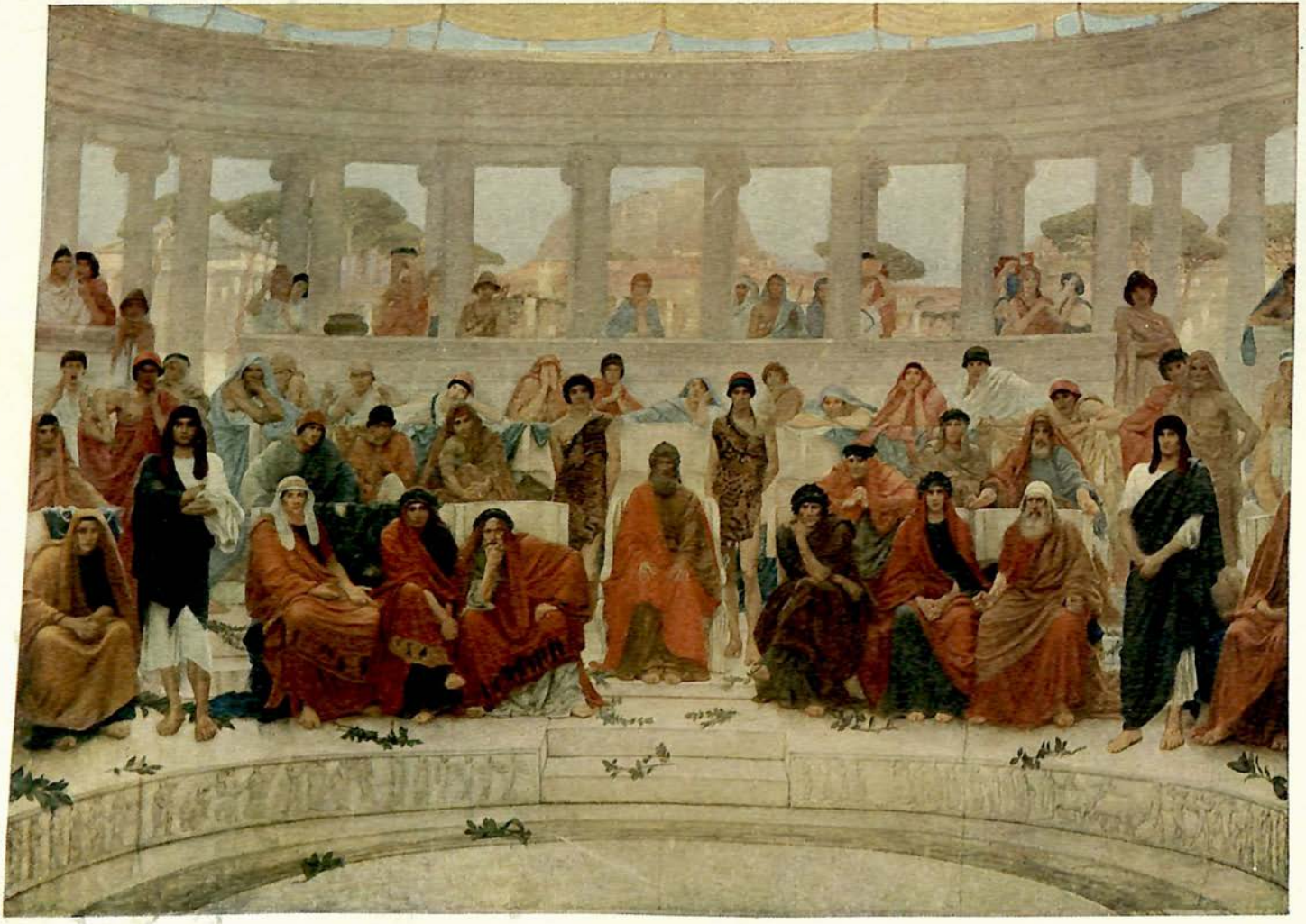
## AN AUDIENCE IN ATHENS DURING THE REPRESENTATION OF THE AGAMEMNON.

From the painting by Sir William Blake Richmond, R.A., K.C.B., in the Birmingham Art Gallery.

This picture represents the auditorium of the theatre at Athens, as seen from the stage during the performance of the *Agamemnon* of Æschylus, at the moment when Clytemnestra is describing the slaying of Agamemnon. The audience sit in three rows under the shadow of the velarium extended above the colonnade. Between the white shafts of the columns are seen the Acropolis with its group of buildings, and the temples of Bacchus and Theseus.

The painting was executed in 1884 and exhibited in the Grosvenor Gallery in 1885. It was acquired for Birmingham in 1886. It is reproduced by permission of the Corporation of Birmingham.

The artist, Sir William Blake Richmond, was born at London in 1842, and became a Royal Academician in 1895. He was knighted in 1897.



AN AUDIENCE IN ATHENS

SIR W. B. RICHMOND, R.A

that took part in it, not always on the same side. In the main it was a war between Athens with its allies and the bulk of the Peloponnesian states led by Sparta, also a war of Dorian against Ionian, and of democracies against aristocracies or oligarchies, which, when they got the upper hand in any city, might break it away from allegiance to Athens. Thebes and other Bœotian cities stood also with Sparta against their encroaching neighbour. The war began with a quarrel between Corinth and her colony Corcyra, in which Athens interfered on the side of Corcyra, and Sparta took up the cause of Corinth. At first Athens had the best of it at sea; but could not prevent the Peloponnesian army from overrunning Attica, driving the rural population within the walls, where soon among this crowd of fugitives broke out a plague so sudden and fatal that it was attributed to the enemy having poisoned the cisterns. The fear of infection is said to have hastened the invaders' retreat; but for more than a month they laid waste the country, while the citizens died in thousands amid the horrors so graphically described by Thucydides.

In addition to the original calamity, what oppressed them still more was the crowding into the city from the country, especially the newcomers. For as they had no houses, but lived in stifling cabins at the hot season of the year, the mortality amongst them spread without restraint; bodies lying on one another in the death agony, and half-dead creatures rolling about in the streets and round all the fountains, in their longing for water. The sacred places also in which they had quartered themselves, were full of the corpses of those that died there in them: for in the surpassing violence of the calamity, men not knowing what was to become of them came to disregard everything, both sacred and profane alike. And all the laws were violated which they before observed respecting burials; and they buried them as each one could. And many from want of proper means, in consequence of so many of their friends having already died, had recourse to shameless modes of sepulture; for on the piles prepared for others, some, anticipating those who had raised them, would lay their own dead relative and set fire to them; and others, while the body of a stranger was burning, would throw on the top of it the one they were carrying, and go away.

In other respects also the plague was the origin of lawless conduct in the city, to a greater extent (than it had before existed). For deeds which formerly men hid from view, so as not to do them just as they pleased, they now more readily ventured on; since they saw the change so sudden in the case of those who were prosperous and quickly perished, and of those who before had nothing, and at once came into possession of the property of the dead. So they resolved to take their enjoyment quickly, and with sole view to gratification; regarding their lives and their riches alike as things of a day. As for taking trouble about what he thought honourable, no one was forward to do it; deeming it uncertain whether, before he had attained to it, he would not be cut off.—*Dale's Translation.*

Amid such general demoralization, people turned angrily upon Pericles as cause of their sufferings, and he was deposed from power, but presently restored, to be himself next year a victim of the lingering

epidemic (429 B.C.). The deathbed speech put into his mouth, that "through him no citizen had ever had to put on mourning", records how he had exercised his domination without cruelty. He seems singularly fortunate in a long lease of goodwill from a people much given to rewarding their worthiest leaders by exile, execution, or heavy fines.

His successor in influence was Cleon, the tanner, whose name has become a proverb for the blustering demagogue; but perhaps we have the worst of his character in the satire of Aristophanes. He inflamed the citizens to war, while the more prudent Nicias, leader of the aristocratic party, would have counselled peace. When the Spartan general Brasidas carried the war against the Athenian dependencies in Macedonia and Thrace, Cleon, less lucky in arms than in harangues, fell at the battle of Amphipolis, by which this colony was lost. His place as stormy agitator was taken by Alcibiades, adopted son of Pericles, a handsome young man of dissolute morals and winning manners, whose unsteady character had a better side shown in his respect for Socrates as his instructor, as by a knack of making friends only to lose them as they found how little he could be trusted. When all parties were tired of the indecisive war, and Athens and Sparta made temporary peace, Alcibiades stirred his fellow citizens into joining a new confederation, with Argos for its nominal head, which soon provoked Spartan opposition. The struggle began afresh, under such apparently favourable auspices for Athens that she was tempted to extend its area by a disastrous expedition to the west, where Sicily and the southern end of Italy, known as Magna Græcia, were as thickly sown with Greek colonies as was Ionia on the eastern side.

The scheme of Alcibiades and his partisans was to interfere in the dissensions of Sicily, with the view of bringing it into the Athenian confederacy. Nicias opposed this wild plan, but when outvoted he did not refuse to be joint leader, along with Alcibiades and Lamachus, of a strong fleet packed with choice men, which set out 415 B.C., expecting to return triumphant and laden with spoil. But, from the first, things went amiss. The Athenians were coldly welcomed by the Italian colonies, and the three generals fell out as to the best way of accomplishing their real object—the conquest of Sicily. Before they could agree upon attacking its capital, Syracuse, Alcibiades was recalled to Athens to stand his trial for impiety, a charge based upon some drunken freak in which he had taken part in mutilating the busts of Hermes that stood thick in every Greek city. The accusation, including other acts of profanity, was no new one; but in this plausible demagogue's absence the peace party had been pressing it home with intent to lame his ambitious designs, and the volatile Athenians now let themselves be moved to a mood of religious intolerance which he durst not face. Giving his escort the slip, he sought refuge in Sparta, not only renouncing his allegiance to Athens, but urging the Spartans to attack the very expedition for which he was chiefly responsible.

Nicias, reluctantly doing the duty put upon him, had pressed the

siege of Syracuse with such success that the citizens were ready to surrender, when a Spartan expedition reached Sicily to be the core of a native army which suddenly turned the scale. Nicias found himself attacked in his camp; the Syracusan fleet took courage to resist his blockading squadron; and even when reinforcements arrived from Athens, one attempt after another failed till the Athenian ships were destroyed off Syracuse in sight of the besieging army. There seemed nothing for it but retreat into the interior, where Nicias hoped to find allies among the quarrelsome Sicilians. The invaders' retreat being unwisely delayed, their enemy had time to block the roads; then, parted in two divisions, they were harassed by continual assaults, till first one, then the other, surrendered after a butchery that did not cease with the fighting. Nicias and his fellow general, Demosthenes, were put to death. The prisoners spared, some thousands in number, were crowded for months into the quarries of Syracuse, almost starved, tormented, first by heat, then by cold, in their naked plight, so that many of them died miserably, the rest being sold as slaves.

The Athenians might well be stunned by the news of this disaster, that encouraged states hitherto neutral to side against them, and spread a spirit of revolt among their colonies. But the proud city, after venting its rage upon those who had counselled it so ill, quickly took measures to face its increasing enemies. A new fleet was formed, whose commanders for a time brought the turbulent democracy under an oligarchical rule. Sparta, which had long been intriguing with Persia, now sought to buy its support at the price of the Ionian cities' independence. But that political chameleon Alcibiades, falling out with his Spartan friends, had fled afresh to Tissaphernes, the Persian viceroy of Ionia, whom he dissuaded from a policy that might make Sparta too powerful, and tried to win him as an ally for Athens, with which the fugitive now contrived to make his peace. He was not only forgiven, but put at the head of the Athenian fleet, winning victories that blotted out the memory of his treason. But the first taste of defeat turned the populace against him, and again he went into exile, returning after a time to Asia, where he was obscurely assassinated (404 B.C.), according to one account at the instigation of the Spartans.

Alcibiades lived to see the fall of his native city. In 405 B.C., its fleet, taken by surprise at Ægospotami, in the Hellespont, was destroyed with great slaughter, while a Peloponnesian garrison lay encamped on its own territory. Its dependents fell away, or were reduced by the Spartan general, Lysander, slowly closing upon helpless Athens, that had then to choose between surrender and starvation. Some of her neighbours, exasperated by the bitter struggle, were for exterminating the pride of Athens; but Lysander, as to worthy foemen, granted peace on condition of the fortified harbour being demolished with the long walls joining it to the city, that henceforth was to content itself with twelve ships of war. He superintended this dismantling (404 B.C.), and put in power an oligarchical government, known as the Thirty Tyrants. This was soon overthrown by a revolution that

brought the Spartans back upon the city, but again in a forbearing spirit; and the Athenians were left to rebuild their constitution on the old democratic basis that had proved so unstable.

So died out the long Peloponnesian War. In this welter of invasion and civil strife many men had been driven into landless exile who had no resource but hiring themselves as mercenaries on either side. The demand for soldiers having ceased for a time in Greece, it was now that Cyrus the Younger was able to enlist 10,000 Greeks, whom he tempted on as far as the Euphrates against his brother, Artaxerxes; then, their patron having fallen at Cunaxa (401 B.C.), they made their celebrated homeward march to the Black Sea under the leadership of Xenophon. He and his comrades reaching Europe in distress, took service with a king of Thrace, and presently with the Spartans, when Xenophon, an Athenian exile, did not stick at fighting against Athens. Lysander's victories were favoured by the liberality of Cyrus, who, with an eye on the Persian throne, had as satrap cultivated the friendship of soldierly Greeks. These are hints how far warfare was now become sophisticated out of the simple state when every citizen took arms, unpaid, to defend his native soil. Pericles had hired mercenary soldiers as well as artists, and the silver mines of Laurium provided not only temples and statues but ships and sailors.

It was now (399 B.C.) that Athens drew on itself the infamy of voting the death of Socrates for the crime of being wiser than common men. Yet its political downfall seemed but to set in relief its position as an intellectual capital. The city of Athens made the rendezvous of Sophists, a name which took on unflattering implications, but at first denoted the professors of what became a university for Greece, the favourite subject of their lectures being the art of rhetoric that was so practically useful in gaining influence over a populace at once excitable and keen-witted, trained from childhood by object lessons in the sublime and beautiful. Plato, more than once tempted away to the court of the Syracusan tyrants, taught at Athens in a school known as the Academy, which gave a name to his philosophy. His pupil Aristotle lectured while strolling in the walks of the Lyceum, a habit from which his followers were called "Peripatetics". In the next generation Epicurus sought to free men's minds from superstition by a doctrine nobler than that usually associated with his name. Then, about 300 B.C., Zeno, in a porch or painted gallery (*stoa*) gave lessons imbibed by the Stoics, the most austere moralists of antiquity, whose principles would blend with those of Christianity.

The Peloponnesian War had left Sparta supreme in Greece, where soon her insolent bearing and exactions made her hateful even to the states that had helped her to humble Athens. At first she showed vigour in championing the Ionian cities against Persia, but before long she had her hands so full at home as to abandon them by a shameful treaty. Spartans were not the only Greeks now willing to buy the barbarian king's sword to be thrown into the scale of their

contests. The Spartan fleet (394 B.C.) had been crushed by a Persian force, one of whose leaders was the defeated Athenian admiral Conon. He went on to Athens to restore the fortifications, behind which she began to raise her head again, and found old enemies like Thebes ready to back her against the pride of Sparta. There came another bout of promiscuous fighting, in which the Athenians successfully employed light troops called peltasts against the heavily armed hoplites, that hitherto had borne down such hosts of Asiatics. Athens also increased her fleet and regained something of her old mastery at sea. The Spartans garrisoned Thebes, but were driven out by surprise. After several ineffectual campaigns Sparta was fain to give up her domineering pretensions, having already fallen away from the frugal hardiness that had made her sons so formidable warriors; and she, too, had to provide gold and silver to hire mercenary troops.

After a general peace, made 371 B.C., Hellenes were presently again by the ears. Now came a brief supremacy of Thebes, that, for all its old heroic memories, had hitherto played no noble part in the national history. A Spartan invasion of Bœotia was defeated at Leuctra (371 B.C.) by Epaminondas, the general to whom Thebes owed this burst of glory. Epaminondas went on to invade the Peloponnesus, freeing Arcadian and Messenian vassals from the power of Sparta, and setting up a league of these cities as a thorn in her side. So high rose the pride of Thebes that she was ready to defy both Athens and Sparta, for once strangely allied. But on his fourth invasion, when he had nearly taken the city of Sparta, Epaminondas fell at Mantinea; then, though the battle was won by the Thebans, they did not push their success on behalf of quarrelsome allies, and peace was made (362 B.C.).

Meanwhile, on the north had been growing the power that would profit by all those weakening struggles. The rugged kingdom of Macedon was ruled by princes who had no need to flatter turbulent mobs. One of them, Philip, father of Alexander the Great, spent his youth as a hostage or prisoner in Thebes at the time of its martial exploits; and he seems there to have studied the elevation of his own country. On his return home, made guardian of an infant nephew, he usurped the kingdom (359 B.C.), then set himself to strengthen it by disciplining its hardy warriors, whom he drilled in the renowned Macedonian phalanx that became as formidable as his light cavalry. Before long this ambitious neighbour began to disquiet the Greeks by his encroachments, extending his mountain kingdom to the seacoast, where his seizure of isolated towns brought him into quarrel with Athens. But the disunited states lay too exhausted to check a general as artful as bold, and Philip's pretensions were so far sanctioned that he got admission to the Amphictyonic League as one of the Hellenic powers. In this capacity he was called on to take part in punishing the Locrians for desecrating sacred land by the plough, an opportunity he seized to push his own ends of conquest. Now, however, the eloquence of Demosthenes had wakened a spirit of resistance at Athens,

while the famous orator's opponents urged rather to accept that stirring king as leader against the Persians. When Philip attacked Byzantium, commanding their trade route into the Black Sea, the Athenians listened to the "Philippics" of Demosthenes. Now Athens and Thebes stood together against a common danger, but their allied force of mercenaries was overwhelmingly defeated (338 B.C.) at Chæronea, in Bœotia, scene of more than one battle in this troubled history.

In his hour of victory Philip showed a disposition to win over Athens by moderation, yet made it clear that his will was to be law. Leaving a garrison in Thebes, he marched into the Peloponnesus, receiving the submission of all the states except Sparta, which was allowed to shrink sullenly into her shell of mountain ridges. The other states let themselves be summoned to a congress at Corinth, where Philip was proclaimed general of all Greece, which thus at last owned a master. It was against Persia he offered himself as champion; and had he not been assassinated (336 B.C.) this resolute and crafty king might have gone on to play the part performed by his illustrious son.

## CHAPTER III

# Alexander the Great (356–323 B.C.)

By just right is this conqueror styled Great: huge as his name bulked in the eyes of antiquity, and widely as he spread his fame, it is only in enlightened perspective that the grandeur of his achievements can be measured. Born heir to a poor mountain kingdom, he unconsciously prepared the ground for history by mastering the best part of the known world, a dominion, indeed, which did not endure as a political body, but which scattered the seeds of Hellenic civilization over a fruitful field. Such a hero commanded so many pens that his short life affords the first full-length picture of biography, standing out against the natural halo of legend, that lingered so glowingly as to make his fabulous exploits a favourite theme in the chronicles of medieval romance. The authentic incidents of his career, indeed, by themselves read like a fairy tale.

Macedonia was inhabited by hardy clans who seem to have been a lagging rear of the Achæan or other Aryan invaders of Greece from the north; and if these are to be taken as the main strain of the mixed Hellenic race, the Macedonians might boast themselves of purest stock. Behind the mysterious mass of Olympus, they had stood apart from Greek progress and the political turmoil of cities, content to be loyal to hereditary chiefs who could lead them to plunder and petty victory. For some generations, however, their kings had shown a disposition to claim the birthright of Hellenes by fostering a less rude life. In his old age Euripides was welcomed by one of Alexander's predecessors, with whom he ended his days, torn in pieces, it is said, by such Molossian mastiffs as were bred among hunters, with whom Philippos, "lover of horses", made a favourite name.

These kings, who claimed descent from old Argos, sent their horses to compete in the Olympic Games, which shows them not regarded as the barbarians held up to scorn in Demosthenic oratory. Philip respected letters and science, as shown in his choice of Aristotle for his son's tutor; and at his court Attic Greek was spoken, while the vernacular tongue seems to have been an illiterate dialect. Several Alexanders had already appeared in the history of this region, and the name, meaning "helper of men", was an alias of Homer's Paris, another hint how those northern kings cherished kinship with more cultured Hellenes. Olympias, Philip's queen, was believed to descend from Neoptolemus, son of Achilles, than which no Greek could boast a nobler ancestry. Alexander the Great also traced in his veins the

blood of Hercules, and it even came to be said that Jupiter-Ammon had been his father in the old style of Olympian intrigue. Such mythical traditions found congenial soil in a highland country; but Philip, apart from his lineage, had clearly in him the stuff of which heroes and demigods are made. We have already seen what a general and a statesman was this king who trained his sturdy warriors to double a dominion rich only in men and cattle. From Ægæa, old citadel of the race, he had transferred his capital to Pella, on a plain behind the modern Salonica, and there Alexander was born, 356 B.C.

According to admiring historians, the boy soon proved father to the man. His first tutors brought him up in severe discipline; then later on no less a philosopher than Aristotle was tempted to Macedonia as head of a school of young princes and nobles, in which Alexander learned to appreciate Homer so well that he carried on his campaigns a copy of this Greek Scripture, as corrected or edited by Aristotle. He appears to have profited by a considerable course of instruction, but that he was no mere bookish lad is shown by the celebrated story of his taming Bucephalus to be his favourite charger till it died of old age. All accounts make him generous and impulsive, yet able to exercise self-control, chaste and temperate in youth, a virtue he lost later on. His pride appears in a story that when urged to test his athletic prowess at an Olympic foot-race, he answered: "Yes, if I had kings for my competitors!" In after life, it was noted, he did not care to encourage the professional athleticism that seemed injurious to healthful activity and military service. His precocious prudence was noted when, ambassadors coming from Persia in Philip's absence, the young prince asked them no childish questions, but informed himself of the state of their country with a shrewdness in which they foresaw a greater king than his father. He was as singularly handsome as winning in his manners, well made, with regular features, his clear skin and blue eyes set in a lion-like mane of yellow hair that might recall Homer's description of Achilles. His face remained smooth in later years; and it is believed that he set the fashion of shaving, followed for centuries by Greeks and Romans.

While Alexander is described as being restlessly jealous of Philip's conquests, complaining that they would leave nothing for himself to do, the father might well be proud of such a son. When he set out on the expedition that ended with the subjugation of Greece, Alexander at sixteen was left regent of the kingdom, and had the chance of winning his spurs against a rebellious tribe, which he expelled from their haunts, settling there a colony, the first of many to be called by his name. Later he joined his father's army, and fought with distinction at the decisive battle of Chæronea.

Now master of Greece, Philip was not as fortunate in his domestic life. His manners were so far Oriental that Olympias would be only *sultana valide* of a harem, to which he added a young bride, Cleopatra, name that was once again to breed strife in history. The jealous resentment of Olympias seems to have been shared by her son, who

went off with his mother to her brother, King of Epirus; and she is said to have put into his head a suspicion that Philip meant another son to be his heir. The quarrel between father and son was made up, Olympias also coming back for the marriage of her daughter to her brother of Epirus, which looks like a scheme of family reconcilement. But when at this festival Philip was stabbed by one Pausanias, apparently in revenge for private injuries, there did not fail whispers that Olympias, and even Alexander himself, had instigated the crime. Thus died Philip, in the prime of his busy life, else his name might have been renowned over the conqueror's for whom he paved a way.

Alexander was only twenty when he became king (336 B.C.), but he soon showed how his vassals were mistaken in supposing they could throw off the yoke of a youth. As soon as he had made sure against possible pretenders to the throne, by arrest or summary execution, according to one account he marched straight to Corinth, silencing the joy with which his enemies had heard of Philip's death; and at once he got himself proclaimed as successor in the generalship of Greece. Before long he had to turn northwards against revolting frontier tribes, which he one by one chastised; and arduous marches led him over the Balkans as far as the Danube. So long was he lost in this barbarous region that a report of his death spread through Greece. Demosthenes, partly influenced by bribes from Darius, King of Persia, who recognized what a champion was rising up against him, once more stirred the Athenians to assert their independence. The same spirit gathered head in other cities. Thebes openly rebelled, blockading the Macedonian garrison in its Cadmean citadel. When the news reached Alexander he gave up his harrying of the barbarians to move south with such rapidity that in a fortnight his army came in sight of Thebes.

Here he restrained his impetuosity, waiting with prudent patience to give the Thebans a chance of submission. But they rashly sallied out against him; then the close-set ranks of the phalanx, bristling with long spears, drove them in rout through the gates, Alexander at their heels, soon joined by his garrison from the citadel, and the rest of the battle was a massacre. Six thousand men fell in the streets. The victor, excited by bloodshed or determined on a signal example, ordered the city to be utterly demolished, only the house of its poet Pindar being spared. With certain exceptions, such as priests, the descendants of Pindar, and his own partisans, the survivors, 30,000 men, women, and children, were sold as slaves, a wholesale supply that brought down the price of flesh and blood in Grecian markets.

The young king, who, as a rule, showed himself generous to fallen enemies, is said to have afterwards repented of his severity towards Thebes; but it answered the purpose of cowing all further opposition. Troops advancing to the aid of Thebes came to a halt and slunk back. The terrorstruck Athenians, hastily throwing over the policy of Demosthenes, sent the conqueror a fawning embassy, to be received with scorn; but after some negotiation he pardoned Athens on easy

terms. To turn away his wrath the states assembled at Corinth renewed their offers of allegiance, with an invitation to lead Greece forthwith against Persia.

It was either now, or on a former visit to Corinth, that he is said to have sought out Diogenes, whom he courteously asked what he could do for him. "Only stand out of my sunlight!" growled the surly cynic; then, while the king's attendants turned up their eyes at such uncourtliness, the remark put into his mouth is: "Were I not Alexander, I should wish to be Diogenes!" At this time also Plutarch dates his visit to the oracle at Delphi, where, the priestess refusing to do her office for him, he copied the masterfulness of his fabled ancestor Hercules in dragging her forth into the temple, but asked for no further utterance than her exclamation: "Thou art invincible!" His sanguine generosity is illustrated by a tale that, on the eve of the expedition against Persia, he gave away to his friends all he had to give, declaring that for himself he need keep nothing but hope.

The preparations were pushed on so rapidly that in the second year of his reign Alexander stood ready to invade Asia, where, at Philip's death, a footing was already held by a Macedonian force, under his trusty lieutenant Parmenio. A contrast to the unwieldy host of Xerxes made the army that now attacked an empire nearly as large as Europe. Alexander had less than 40,000 men, including some 5000 cavalry. But these soldiers were well armed and well disciplined, the mass of them his own warlike subjects, flushed with victory, for the other states showed more readiness to egg him on than to back him up; and he saw best not to press them for larger contingents. The Athenians let their ships lie in harbour, reluctant to launch them in the service of one whom they looked on as an oppressor rather than a champion; and though Alexander had a small fleet at his disposal, before long he saw best to get rid of it as tying down too many men to the service of the oar. His *corps d'élite* was a cavalry known as the *hetairoi*, or companions of the king, who showed himself always ready to charge at their head, when a prudent leader would have kept his person in the background. On the other hand, the Great King's dominion, divided into a score of satrapies, made up its population of perhaps 50,000,000 in many races, held together by force, among whom the Aryan Persians, that were the core of this ill-knit body, had now, in the luxury of wealth and power, let go the manly virtues by which their ascendancy had been won. The flower of the army was a division of Greek mercenaries fighting against the general of Greece, while his strong fleet, by which the third Darius commanded the sea, was mainly manned by Phœnicians and other foreigners.

A trusted veteran named Antipater was left regent of Macedonia, which its young king would never see again. Marching along the coast, in the spring of 334 B.C., his army crossed the Hellespont at its narrowest point, where Xerxes had built the bridge of boats, a passage held for Alexander by his troops. The king himself gratified his Hellenic sentiment by landing where Agamemnon's army had

THE
PERSIAN EMPIRE.
THE WORLD
WHICH ALEXANDER CONQUERED.
English Miles
100 0 100 200 300
Note
Persian Empire under Darius III (Codomannus)
Empire of Alexander before the War with Persia
States federated to Alexander
Independent States
Boundary of Alexander's Empire after the War
Alexander's route
Longitude East 30 of Greenwich
Tropic of Cancer
SARMATIA
SCYTHIA
MEDITERRANEAN SEA
BLACK SEA
CASPIAN SEA
PERSIAN GULF
ERYTHRÆAN SEA
RED SEA
Desert
ARABIA
AFRICA
INDIA
THRACE
MACEDONIA
ILLYRIA
GREECE
ASIA MINOR
CAPPADOCIA
ARMENIA
ASSYRIA
MESOPOTAMIA
BABYLONIA
SUSIANA
MEDIA
PERSIS
CARMANIA
PARTHIA
HYRCANIA
BACTRIANA
SOGDIANA
ARACHOSIA
DRANGIANA
GEDROSIA
Chorasmii
Massagetae
Arsi
Getae
Crete
Cyprus
Cyrenaica
EGYPT
Babylon
Susa
Persepolis
Ecbatana
Thebes
Memphis
Alexandria
Rome
Athens
Sparta
Troy
Tyre
Damascus
Jerusalem
Gaza
Carthage
Zadracarta
Bactra
Maracanda
Alexandria Eschate
Tashkend
Indus R.
Ganges R.
Nile R.
Euphrates R.
Tigris R.
Jaxartes R.
Oxus R.
Hindu Kush Mts.
Mount Taurus
Mount Caucasus
Mount Zagros
Mount Parnassus
Mount Olympus
Mount Ida
Mount Sinai
Mount Lebanon
Adriatic Sea
Libyan Desert
Arabian Desert
Persian Gulf
Red Sea
Erythræan Sea
Cataracts of Nile
Cataracts of Nile under Ptolemies
Cataracts of Nile under Romans
City of the Brahmans
Longitude East 30 of Greenwich
John Bartholomew & Co., Edin.r

taken ground against Troy. This city, after due rites to the gods and to the memory of Achilles, he ordered to be rebuilt; then, rejoining the main body, he pushed on to the Granicus, a river falling into the Sea of Marmora, where the enemy awaited them.

The empire of Darius was well organized, as far as roads and posts went, so its autocrat, with friends and spies all over degenerate Greece, should have been kept informed as to the invader's movements. Yet all the force assembled in this corner seems to have been little larger than Alexander's own. The Persian army, however, was found so strongly posted behind the steep banks of the river that prudent Parmenio advised delay in attacking it; but the young general declared that after crossing the Hellespont he was not to be stopped by a petty stream. Heading his horse-guards he dashed across a ford, at the risk of being swept away, and struggled up the slippery bank under a shower of darts and arrows, to wedge himself among the Persian masses. Alexander's rich armour and white plume made him conspicuous in the thick of the mêlée; he was on the point of being cut down by a sword that had shorn off his crest, when his friend Clitus slew the assailant. Behind the cavalry came the phalanx with its long spears boring into the Persian ranks, which gave way on all sides when the centre was pierced. Having cleared his front, the king advanced against a strong body of Greek mercenaries that, strangely, had been held back on a height in the rear. They stood their ground, to be surrounded: Plutarch asserts that, having asked for quarter, which the victor sternly refused, they were destroyed, captured, or scattered after such desperate resistance that in this epilogue of the fight the Macedonians lost more than in the perilous work of crossing the river. But their loss appears to have been slight in proportion to that of the defeated army, including several of its leaders. As is the way with Oriental troops, it broke up under a blow which made Alexander master of that corner of Asia Minor. As proof of his victory he sent home the prisoners in chains, with the booty, a share of which he set apart for his lukewarm allies, especially seeking to flatter Athens with a gift of three hundred suits of armour; and some time later he released the Athenian mercenaries taken at this battle.

The king now turned south to free the Ionian cities, welcomed by democracies but not by the oligarchs where their party had the upper hand. Sardis submitted and received a Greek government. So did Ephesus, the largest of the coast cities, a revolution breaking out as soon as it was abandoned by its Persian garrison, mainly composed of part of the Greek mercenaries who, under their leader Memnon, had escaped from the slaughter of the Granicus. Other cities overthrew their oligarchs and opened their gates to the deliverer; but at Miletus, to the south of Ephesus, the garrison held out, and Alexander had to bring into play the formidable siege artillery with which he was equipped. In the time of Pericles we already hear of machines for attack or defence, which had now been improved by Syracusan engineers, and came to be much used by Philip in his campaigns against

Greek fortresses. Besides huge "tortoise" shields, under the cover of which advanced a body of men sheltered from missiles, they consisted of catapults like a gigantic crossbow, whirling darts, stones, lumps of glowing iron, or hot sand; of tall towers rolled forward on wheels to overtop the assailed walls; and of battering rams, sometimes so heavy that Diodorus mentions one as worked by 1000 men at a little later date.

With such engines Alexander battered his way through the walls of Miletus, blockaded also by his naval squadron, while a more powerful Persian fleet outside failed to raise the siege, and its crews were driven off if they tried to land for food or water. He had still to master Halicarnassus, farther south, in which took refuge the remnant of the Greek mercenaries under Memnon, an able leader now put in command on this coast. Halicarnassus was dominated by three citadels, and when Alexander had burst into the town and set it on fire, the defenders retreated into those strongholds, which he could not wait to reduce. Having swept the western coast clear to this point, he left a small army before Halicarnassus, and passed on with another detachment. The rest went into winter quarters, while some he sent home, considerately choosing for this furlough young men recently married. His fleet, also, he got rid of as too weak to be serviceable.

The summer campaign thus brought to an end, Alexander gave himself no rest, but marched round the coast of Lycia and Pamphylia, driving out the Persian garrisons; then struck inland across the mountains, where he had to fight his way through wild tribes and winter weather. Gathering up his army as he passed through Phrygia, he held on northwards to Gordium, the rendezvous for his reinforcements from Greece. Here came the famous cutting of the Gordian knot, a bark cord wound tightly round a plough yoke, as to which the story went that whoever could unloose it would be master of all Asia. Alexander now achieved that destiny with his sword.

Yet the stoutest heart might have quailed in a position where he stood beset by enemies, and backed by doubtful friends. Memnon, sallying out from Halicarnassus with the Persian fleet, had been restoring the Ionian oligarchs, and intriguing in Greece, where Sparta stood ready to declare against the usurper of her old leadership, while to few of his allies could he look for hearty support. Alexander saw his mistake in trying to do without a fleet, and bid Antipater provide one as best he could, no easy matter when Athens and other naval states heard with joy of any reverse suffered by their avowed champion. But Memnon fell at the siege of Mitylene, and his successor, Pharnabazus, was withdrawn from this scene of action to join the forces now being assembled by Darius at Babylon. Here the Persian king was served by another Greek lieutenant, Charidemus, a good soldier, whom Alexander had caused to be expelled from Athens. Luckily for him, the cautious counsels of Charidemus went so much against Persian pride that Darius silenced them by death, and let himself be persuaded to lead all the force of his empire against the invader.

Surrounded by over half a million of soldiers, the despot's pompous

Alexander

Darius

THE BATTLE OF ISSUS, B.C. 333

*Mosaic picture from Pompeii, now in the Naples Museum*

This famous mosaic dates from about the beginning of the Christian era, and is probably based upon an earlier Greek painting. It represents the decisive moment in the battle. Alexander, on the left hand, is forcing his way towards Darius, who is standing in his chariot terror-stricken, with hand outstretched towards his enemy. The king's charioteer is wildly lashing his team in an endeavour to extricate his master from the approaching peril. Darius ultimately escaped on horseback from the stricken field.

court advanced from Babylon; and Alexander marched south through Asia Minor to meet him. Having threaded the narrow pass of the Taurus, known as the Cilician Gates, at Tarsus the young king fell ill, as is said, through bathing in the icy waters of the Cydnus. It was then that old Parmenio, who seems to have been a bit of a croaker, sent a letter warning Alexander that his physician, Philip, had been bribed to poison him. The magnanimous patient gave Philip the letter to read, and, with eyes fixed on his face, took from his hands a potion that rewarded such confidence by proving harmless; then the king's constitution threw off the fever, perhaps none the sooner for any drug.

But this sickness caused a delay which deluded Darius into thinking his enemy afraid of him. He boldly crossed the Taurus, making to fall on Alexander from the rear and cut off his retreat. It is not easy to follow the movements in which the armies appear to have dodged each other among the mountain passes. The Persians coming from the north, and the Macedonians turning back along the coast, they met on the banks of the Issus, a stream falling into the head of the Alexandretta Gulf, so called from a town whose native name is otherwise Iskanderoon, after the victor of this battle (333 B.C.).

The odds seemed heavily against Alexander, the soldiers of Darius being nearly twenty to one, outnumbering the invader in Greek mercenaries alone. But the narrow arena of the plain made their very mass a disadvantage after the steady onset of the Greeks had shaken it into a mob. For a time, indeed, it seemed as if the Macedonian spearmen could not push their way. But when their leader, heedless of a wound, came charging up to the chariot of Darius, that unheroic general leaped out to fly on horseback, and with him went his army, throwing away their arms and trampling one another to death, so thickly that the pursuers are said to have found a ravine filled up for them by corpses. The slaughter is put at a hundred thousand, Alexander's loss being counted by hundreds in a battle that gave him half the Persian Empire.

While Darius, with a few thousand men rallied about him, fled behind the Euphrates, Alexander's army had the dealing with enormous spoil, in money as well as tents, equipages, armour, and rich robes, abandoned on the field or afterwards taken at Damascus, to which the heavy baggage had been sent back. Among the booty were the fugitive king's mother, wife, and family, who, by the custom of ancient war, might expect nothing but death or dishonour. But Alexander set a new example by ordering these royal captives to be treated with respect and consideration. His soldiers were not so scrupulous, who with this orgy of plunder must have begun the demoralization that came upon them as they found themselves masters of a rich and luxurious conquest. Of Alexander himself Plutarch tells that, when ushered into the tent, or rather movable palace, of Darius, at the sight of its gorgeous furniture and golden utensils he exclaimed in admiration or in irony: "This, then, it was to be a king!"

The effects of the battle of Issus were far-reaching. It stifled the

plots breeding against the king in Greece; at Athens Demosthenes and his partisans had to dissemble the disappointment with which they heard of his continued success; and the congress of states at Corinth thought well to vote him a gold crown for victories they had sparely helped to gain. Darius addressed the victor in supplication that his family might be given back to him. Later on he sent another embassy, offering all Asia west of the Euphrates, along with 10,000 talents and the hand of his daughter as the price of peace. If he were Alexander, opined old Parmenio, he would accept such terms. "So would I, if I were Parmenio!" scornfully answered the king, and sent back to Darius the same answer as he had already given to the former overture: Let him address the conqueror henceforth as King of Asia, and lord of all his empire; or, if he chose, let him stand to fight for them, else Alexander would seek him out wherever he might flee.

For the present the victory was followed up in what might seem a roundabout way. Instead of pushing home upon Darius, Alexander turned aside to sweep the coast of Phœnicia and occupy the harbours that made his enemy's naval base. He may have expected little difficulty in overrunning this tongue of the Empire; but, while Sidon and other cities submitted, Tyre, that luxurious capital of Mediterranean commerce, cursed by the prophets of Israel, offered resistance that cost him more than half a year's delay. Built on an island and strongly fortified, it had to be attacked by means of a mole or causeway pushed out from the mainland. This work was destroyed by fire-ships, and the Tyrian vessels took such an active part in the defence that Alexander had to collect a fleet at Sidon, being now able to enlist deserters from the losing side. He took the sea for once, in his only naval battle to shatter the Tyrian fleet before the eyes of the defenders, soon brought to sore straits. In their cruel pride they had hurled Greek prisoners over the walls in sight of their comrades, who took hot revenge when at last they stormed into the city. Half the population had escaped by sea to Carthage; the rest were butchered or sold into slavery. The capture was celebrated by games and rites in honour of Hercules, within whose famous temple at Tyre its princes had taken sanctuary that availed for the sparing of their lives. Frequently we read of Alexander halting to hold such festivals, a mingling of religious ceremonies and athletic competitions that went to keep up the spirit of his Greek soldiery.

The next labour of the Macedonian Hercules was to take Gaza, that old citadel of Palestine's godfathers, the Philistines. Josephus then describes him as visiting Jerusalem, offering sacrifice in the Temple, and treating the high priest with special respect, who had rather expected punishment for his neglect to send men and supplies as demanded. This story seems very doubtful; but it is certain that Alexander showed favour to the Jews, as did Napoleon afterwards in his day, and it seems to have been through his patronage of that scattered race that the great city he was now about to found in Egypt soon became a centre of Jewish life.

THE FAMILY OF DARIUS AT THE FEET OF ALEXANDER. From the painting by Paolo Veronese in the National Gallery, London.

The painting shows the mother, wife, and family of the Persian king, taken captives after the battle of Issus, being presented to the conqueror by one of the ministers of Darius. Alexander is in red armour, and beside him are his lieutenants, Hephæstion and Parmenio. The picture is an interesting example of the manner in which subjects, sacred as well as secular, were used by the "old masters" to display the personages, costumes, and architecture of their own time.

Paolo Caliari or Cagliari, popularly known as Paolo Veronese, was born at Verona in 1528, and died at Venice sixty years later. Many of his paintings are on a magnificent scale, in keeping with the pomp and splendour which he delighted to portray. This huge canvas is one of Veronese's grandest and best-preserved works. It was painted about 1566 for the Pisani family, and hung in the Palazzo Pisani, Venice, until purchased for the National Gallery in 1857.

THE FAMILY OF DARIUS AT THE FEET OF ALEXANDER.

PAOLO VERONESE

A year had passed since the battle of Issus, when the conqueror entered Egypt, which proved an easy prize. The Persian satrap here had no force to resist him; and the inhabitants hailed him as a deliverer, all the more heartily when, to flatter their religion, he solemnly sacrificed to Apis at Memphis, the capital. No small part of his success as a conqueror was due to such politic regard for the rites and customs of the invaded peoples, while he dutifully attended to the service of his native gods, perhaps in the same liberal spirit as made Napoleon use religion as an instrument for managing men. Like Napoleon, indeed, Alexander seems to have had a fitful bent for superstition, though he could neglect omens and auspices when they crossed his purpose. Marching along the African coast to the Greek colony of Cyrene, he struck across the desert for the oracle of Jupiter-Ammon, his consultation of which is thus recorded by Plutarch in Langhorne's translation:—

The minister of Ammon received him with salutations from the God, as from a father; and when he enquired: "Whether any of the assassins of his father had escaped him?" the priest desired he would not express himself in that manner, "for his father was not a mortal". Then he asked: "Whether all the murderers of Philip were punished; and whether it was given the proponent to be the conqueror of the world?" Jupiter answered: "That he granted him that high distinction; and that the death of Philip was sufficiently avenged." Upon this Alexander made his acknowledgments to the god by rich offerings, and loaded the priests with presents of great value. This is the account most historians give us of the affair of the oracle; but Alexander himself, in the letter he wrote to his mother on that occasion, only says: "He received certain private answers from the oracle, which he would communicate to her, and her only, at his return".

Some say, Ammon's prophet being desirous to address him in an obliging manner in Greek, intended to say: *O Paidion*, which signifies *My Son*; but in his barbarous pronunciation made the word end with an *s*, instead of an *n*, and so said: *O Pai dios*, which signifies *O Son of Jupiter*. Alexander (they add) was delighted with the mistake in the pronunciation, and from that mistake was propagated a report that Jupiter himself had called him his son.

He went to hear Psammo, an Egyptian philosopher, and the saying of his that pleased him most was: "That all men are governed by God, for in everything that which rules and governs us is divine". But Alexander's own maxim was more agreeable to sound philosophy. He said: "God is the common father of men, but more particularly of the good and virtuous".

When among the barbarians, indeed, he affected a lofty port, such as might suit a man perfectly convinced of his divine origin; but it was with great caution that he assumed any degree of divinity among the Greeks.

Some writers take it that from now the young king's head began to be turned, as might well be after such amazing victories; and that he was willing not only to have himself thought, but to believe himself, more than mortal. One of his artificers boldly proposed to carve Mount Athos into a colossal statue of the conqueror, who employed this bold projector for the construction of the greatest of many cities called by

his name. Alexandria was now marked out by him on an island at the mouth of the Nile, where still it shrunkenly represents the ancient glories of what was to become for a time the largest city in the world, taking the place of Tyre as its chief harbour, according to Alexander's design.

After wintering in Egypt, and here, as elsewhere, having organized a new administration as basis for fresh conquests, he returned along the Syrian coast to Tyre, thence in the summer of 331 B.C. striking inland for the Euphrates. A less audacious leader might have seen cause for turning homewards rather, for now at last the Spartans had taken courage to proclaim a revolt against him in the Peloponnesus, which gathered head at first, while the Macedonian regent had his hands full with a rising of frontier tribes in the north. Alexander spoke of this scornfully as a "war of mice"; but it must have been a relief to him to learn in the autumn how Antipater had found himself forced to march south and inflict a crushing blow on the Spartans at Megalopolis. This regent's task was such a hard one that he fairly earned a place in the story. He had not only to stand on guard against open and secret enemies all about him, but to foil the quarrelsome and intriguing temper of Olympias, treated with respect by her son, yet trusted with no share in the government; nor could it have been easy for Antipater to fulfil all the young king's peremptory orders and to satisfy his demands for men, now that he was in no want of money. It appears also that the wholesale conqueror had twinges of jealousy over the successes of a viceroy who might have an eye to the throne if it were left vacant.

Before he heard of the Spartan downfall, Alexander, speeding across Mesopotamia, came to close quarters with the enemy in his front. Darius, having had more than a year's respite to drain the resources of half his empire, awaited him with a force counted at over 1,000,000 men, 40,000 of them horsemen, besides a squadron of those scythe-whirling chariots that made field artillery for the Persians. Warned by his disaster on the narrow arena of Issus, he had now chosen for his battlefield a level plain to the east of the Tigris, where a great trade road passed near the site of Nineveh; and he is said to have artificially smoothed the ground to make it fitter for the action of his cavalry. The real name of this place was Gaugamela; but the ensuing battle, by some freak of history, took its title from the town of Arbela, over 50 miles away.

So sure felt Darius of his position that he allowed the Greeks to ford the Tigris without resistance; and when they, 50,000 strong at the most, came in view of such a vast host, the warriors of Issus and Tyre seem to have been moved to something like consternation. Even Alexander for once showed caution, and condescended to call a council of war. Others besides Parmenio advised a night attack, which the king rejected in the proud phrase: "I will not steal a victory!" The Persians, indeed, expected such an attack, and tired themselves out by standing to arms all night, while the Greeks took their rest. Alexander

himself is said, after offering pious sacrifices, to have slept sounder than usual, so that Parmenio, having to call him two or three times in the morning, remarked that he slept like one who was already victor rather than about to fight the greatest battle ever heard of in the world.

This decisive field was fought at the beginning of October, 331 B.C. With greater odds against the young general than ever, the result was as before. Headed by his bodyguard of cavalry, the Macedonian spearmen forced a way into the Persian host, making straight for the centre. The ranks of the phalanx opened out to let the Persian chariots dash through, or the horses were shot down by darts before they could reach the serried spears. In his sumptuous equipage Darius again turned to fly. But while the main body of the enemy was thus scattered, his light cavalry had swept round so as almost to have taken the Macedonian camp; and Alexander had to turn from his onset to help Parmenio in defending the rear. But for this hitch the slaughter would have been more appalling than it was, when all the might of Persia melted into a panic-stricken rout.

Leaving Darius to fly before him, the victor turned south to Babylon, still showing signs of its ancient greatness round the temple of Bel, which he ordered to be restored, and, as in Egypt, won priests and people by his respect for their religion. So great was the impression made on him by Babylon that later on we shall see him disposed to make it the centre of his new empire. But now he pushed forward to the Persian capital, Susa, "Shushan the palace" of our Scriptures, which fell into his hands along with a mass of treasure amounting to 50,000 talents, a sum, as the talent had different values under one or other standard, to be variously computed at from ten to twenty millions of our money. Still richer booty, both in money and goods, was abandoned to him at Persepolis, where he spent the winter, and recklessly set on fire this illustrious seat of Persian monarchy, whose grandeur is still recorded by sculptured columns rising brokenly over a blighted land. According to the story, such a drunken freak was put into his head by the courtesan Thais, who thus "like another Helen fired another Troy"; but there seems also reason to suppose that Alexander burned the palace in stern purpose, signally to avenge the havoc wrought by Xerxes at Athens. Already, however, his actions were beginning to show a character intoxicated by continual triumphs.

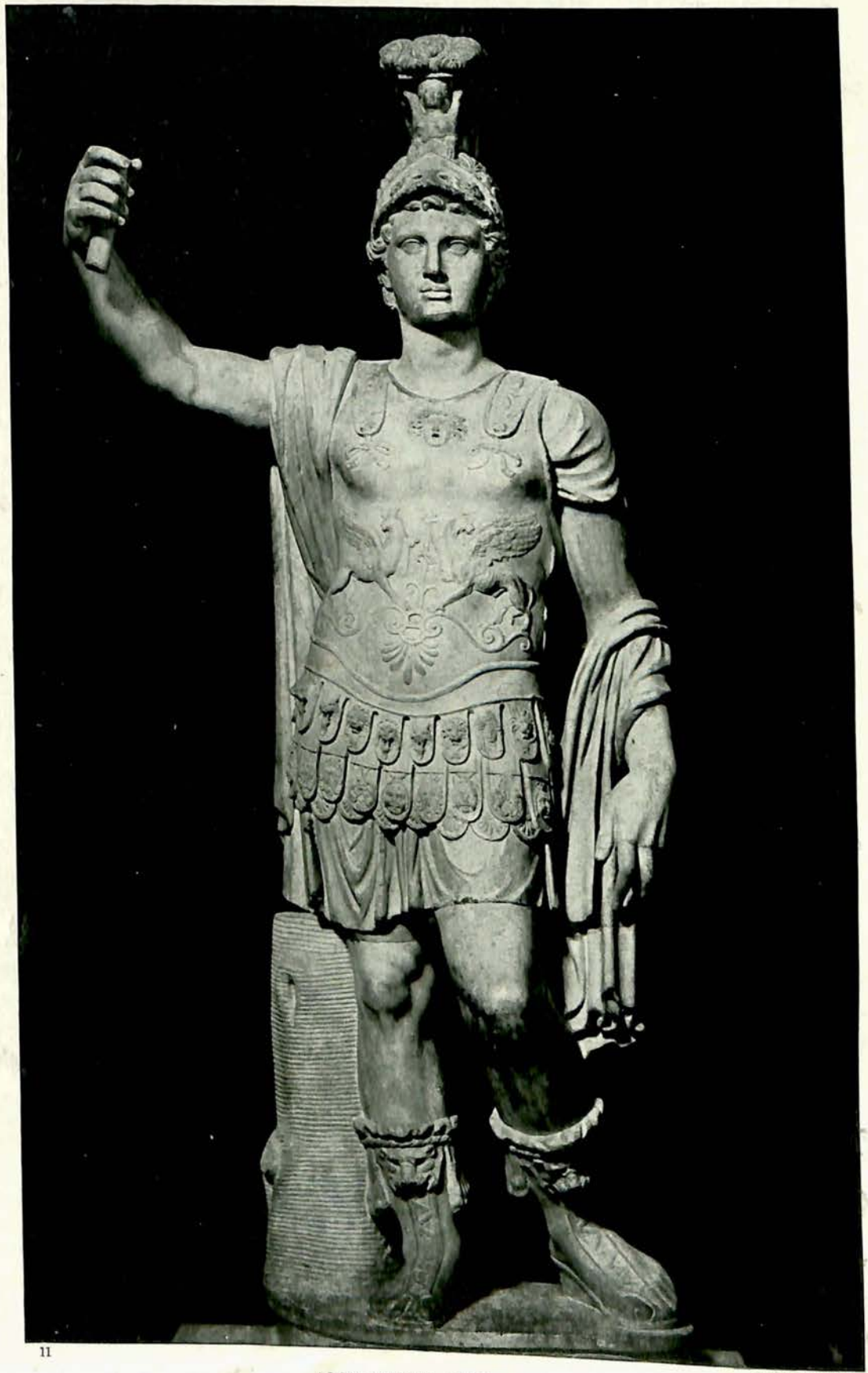
As for his followers, it would have been a miracle had they not been affected by the contagion of Persian luxury and by the wealth gained in plunder or from their master's lavish if capricious generosity. The hardy soldiers fell captive to fine fare, soft beds, rich perfumes, and all the snares of Venus as well as of Bacchus, so that soon they would be grumbling when called on for long, arduous marches. On hearing that Greece was subdued behind him, he sent home the untrustworthy contingents supplied by his Grecian allies. Keeping the Macedonians as heart of his army, he began to levy troops among the conquered peoples, and showed how he looked on his conquest as permanent by

gathering 30,000 boys to be instructed in Greek and in martial discipline, like the janissaries of the Ottoman Empire.

His very name proved a terror, when, in the spring of 330 B.C., Alexander advanced upon Ecbatana, the old Median capital, where Darius had halted for a time. Now, with a small force, melting away and in part disloyal, he fled afresh north-eastward through a mountain pass known as the Caspian Gates. His kinsman, Bessus, satrap of Bactria, made the king a prisoner and carried him off towards his own rugged strongholds on the upper waters of the Oxus, while a band of Greek mercenaries who had hitherto remained true to their employer turned off towards the Caspian, as did some of the Persians under Artabazus. Both these detachments, left without a master, presently came over to Alexander, who now had also the satisfaction of capturing certain Greek envoys sent to intrigue with Darius against him. From deserters he had already learned of Bessus' treachery, and hurried after him along the edge of the great Salt Desert that spreads far over north-eastern Persia. Dashing across a corner of the desert with a few hundred horsemen, hardly able to keep up with their impetuous leader, he was guided by a trail of abandoned baggage to where Darius lay at the gasp of death, having been stabbed by his conductors when he refused to continue the hot flight. Alexander seems to have honestly lamented a foe who, though wanting in martial ardour, would have graced his triumph as an honourable captive; and he had the body embalmed for sumptuous burial. When Bessus at last fell into his hands, he punished the traitor with a cruel death, as to the manner of which historians differ. Plutarch has it that he was fastened to two trees bent together, then let spring back to tear him asunder.

But this was not till some time later. Alexander followed Bessus as far as Bokhara, finally running him down near Balkh, the capital of Bactria. He visited the Caspian Sea; he admired the petroleum springs of this region; he pushed on to the Jaxartes, the modern Sir-daria; he crossed it to attack savage Tartar bands; he occupied Samarcand and Khojend, to which latter place he gave his own name, one still of pride and fable in this heart of Asia; and he settled here several other colonies as outposts of Greek civilization, protected by that name, already so terrible as to keep Persia overawed behind him. At the Jaxartes he had reached the boundary of the Persian Empire on this side, and was not tempted to push far into the Scythian steppes beyond.

It would take long to trace all the excursions that now filled three years, or to report such wonders as an encounter with the queen of the Amazons, related by uncritical historians. What must be touched on is signs of growing disaffection on the part of Alexander's officers, apparently provoked by his own arrogance and violence. It was now that he shocked Hellenic decency by adopting some modification of the cumbrous Oriental costume, in which trousers seemed a special mark of the barbarian. He was noted to take satisfaction in the slavish obeisances offered him by his new subjects, and to have more relish for flattery than for the rough soldierly talk once licensed in his Greek



11

ALEXANDER THE GREAT

Photo. Anderson

*From the statue in the Capitoline Museum, Rome*

comrades. Not content with courting native favour, he turned against long-tried friends, who may well have laid their heads together to stop a career of quixotic adventure. One of the first victims was old Parmenio, who all along played the part of cautious counsellor, and had now been left in command at Ecbatana. His son, Philotas, became accused of plotting against the king's life; then torture seems to have wrung from him some implication of his father, who was also put to death by Alexander's orders. Some time later, in a drunken quarrel, he killed his boon companion Clitus, who had saved his life at the Granicus; for this crime, indeed, repenting in such agony of remorse that there were fears for his reason. Hephæstion and Craterus now come to the front as his favourites, who had good cause to feel themselves little sure of the king's excitable moods. Among the pages who formed a sort of cadet school about his person, one named Harmolaus had been whipped for presuming to take the lead of his master at the chase; and this smarting youth was accused of stirring among his comrades a conspiracy, which brought them to torture and death. Callisthenes, nephew of Aristotle, who had accompanied the king hitherto as philosophic mentor and recorder of his actions, fell into disgrace by blunt criticisms and by refusing to prostrate himself after the example of Eastern courtiers; he was involved in the charge against Harmolaus, and thrown into chains. This is believed to have brought about a coldness between Aristotle and Alexander, whose character was indeed altered since he stood under the influence of his old tutor.

Other instances are given of despotic severity on the part of a king who no longer felt it needful to humour his followers. As a most notable change, he now fell under the charm of woman. Among his captives in Bactria was Roxana, daughter of a chief probably belonging to the same Aryan stock as himself. Her he married, apparently for love. Later, after returning to Persia, perhaps out of policy, he took to wife Statira, daughter of Darius; and the jealousy of those two consorts came to furnish a theme for tragedy. Previously he had taken as wife or concubine the widow of his old adversary Memnon; but in youth this lusty soldier seems to have shown abnormal indifference to a snare that has caught many heroes. Drunkenness must have been a weak point of the nation whose king could be appealed to "from Philip drunk to Philip sober".

But neither wine nor women ever quenched the thirst for glory in one whom the best-known story about him represents as weeping because he had left nothing to conquer. As a matter of fact the known world west of Greece was still untouched by Alexander's arms. What he had conquered was the Persian Empire, that before him had been encroaching into the nearest corner of India; so he came to hear of another great land, as yet so little within Hellenic ken that its lofty mountain barrier he took for the Caucasus; and his ambition now turned to that mysterious region. By this time he was at the head of far larger forces than he had led from Greece. Among the warlike races subdued by him there would be no lack of recruits for an ever-

victorious general. From Greece, too, adventurous spirits came to fill up the ranks of his original comrades, wasted by such arduous campaigns, some of them settled in garrisons or colonies, as no longer fit for the toils of war. It was with more than 100,000 men that, early in 327 B.C., he crossed the Hindu-Koosh, as other conquerors have done both before and after him. Plutarch tells how, on setting out, he saw his soldiers so encumbered by their spoils that he ordered the baggage to be burned, beginning with his own as an example, which looks like a vigorous attempt to shake off the corruption that was at work both on himself and his army. In any case, he would have found it difficult to carry heavy loads over the snowy passes and wild gorges of Afghanistan.

By the Kabul River and the Khyber Pass he descended upon the Punjaub, which was all he knew of India, a name then taken from the Indus, seeming the largest river on earth. While part of his army marched forward to its banks, Alexander himself, out of curiosity or mere love of adventure, turned north towards Chitral, and found some hot fighting among the mountain tribes that have given our own frontier guards so much trouble. A year or so was spent on these exciting divagations before he joined his lieutenants on the banks of the Indus, that had meanwhile been bridged, and a fleet of boats was being collected near Attok, where the river narrows to some 80 yards. Crossing, he advanced to the Jhelam, known to him as the Hydaspes. On this *doab*, or Mesopotamia of the Punjaub, the chief ruler was named Taxiles, who had submitted to the invader, and now received him with rich presents and supplies. But beyond the Jhelam ruled Porus, described as a hero of gigantic stature, and he stood on watch to forbid the passage of the stream swollen by spring floods to a mile in width.

For once the odds in numbers seem to have been on Alexander's side; but the hostile force was made formidable by 300 elephants, the very sight and smell of which would terrify the horses of his cavalry, and for once he had to curb his impetuous temper. Facing Porus across the river, he went on day after day making noisy feints at crossing, so as to keep the Indians on restless guard, till by and by they grew more careless, believing him afraid to attack. Meanwhile he was looking out a ford some miles up the river, to which one stormy night he led part of his army, and by help of boats, rafts, and swimming had next morning brought over some 12,000 picked men to threaten the flank of Porus' line. The Indian army swung round to face him, thus abandoning the defence of the river, the passage left free for Alexander's main body. He himself put in practice his favourite tactics of breaking the enemy's wings by cavalry charges, while in the centre the Macedonian ranks stood not so firm as usual under the trampling and trumpeting of elephants, yet rallied even against such appalling monsters, and hailed darts upon them and their mahouts till the excitable animals, turning tail and huddling together, were as ready to crush down friend as foe. The big chariots, manned by

archers that made another arm of the Indian army, are said to have stuck in the mud of a heavy rainstorm. Alexander's detachment had thus borne the brunt of the engagement, when the rest of the army got across to make it a slaughter of the disordered Indians. One estimate of his loss was about 1000, in a victory (326 B.C.) which looks as if little might have turned it into a defeat at the hands of the same manly stock that in India proved our most resolute foes, and have since made our trustiest soldiers.

Porus, a warrior more worthy of his steel than Darius, had fought bravely, and was hardly persuaded to surrender himself with the proud speech: "Treat me as a king!" Alexander, indeed, behaved to his captive with such royal generosity as to turn him into an ally. Here he founded two cities, one in honour of the victory, and one called after Bucephalus, that fiery steed that now died of old age. After the usual interlude of religious and athletic celebrations he advanced across the Punjaub, fighting his way or receiving submission, till he reached a tributary of the Sutlej, beyond which he heard of another rich land, and was eager to push on into the basin of the Ganges, having already counted as conquered seven nations and two thousand "cities". But here his soldiers failed him, dispirited as they were by long marches in the enervating damp of the rainy season. In vain he tried to hearten them by recalling their past exploits against enormous odds. They refused to go farther; and, after shutting himself up for two days with his bitter mortification, the ardent leader was fain to let himself be conquered by his army, as never before.

He returned to the Hydaspes, on which tributary of the Indus a fleet of boats had been assembled to carry him down to the sea, part of the troops marching along the bank. While the natives usually turned out to wonder at the passage of the invaders, this land voyage was not made without excursions and encounters, in one of which Alexander nearly lost his life by an act of desperate valour more becoming a young hero than a general. Storming a town, he leaped down alone inside the walls; then his comrades could not but follow, to bear him out upon his shield wounded almost to death. The joy of the army when first he was able to show himself on horseback went to make up to him for the bitterness of their late defection. With one delay or other nearly a year more had passed before the Indus brought them to its delta, where for the first time these sons of the tideless Mediterranean were dismayed by the phenomenon of ebb and flow.

Another curiosity that struck those Greek explorers was the *Gymnosophists*, "naked philosophers", as they named the Yogis, who still in India practise their strange austerities, going naked even in snowy mountain regions, with no shelter but a hole of the rocks, cultivating a somewhat fruitless mastery of mind and body that has impressed more critical observers of our time. Such *fakirs* seem then to have played the part of patriots, stirring up their countrymen to resistance. Arrian reports one body of them as reading a moral lesson to the invader when, at the sight of his array, instead of turning to fly, they stood stamping

on the ground, and on his asking through interpreters what this prancing meant, their reply was: "O King, every man owns as much of the earth as this on which we stamp; but thou, a mere man like the rest, except in being meddlesome and arrogant, hast come over so great a part of the earth from thy own land, troubling both thyself and others; and yet thou art soon to die and shalt have only enough earth to be buried in". Plutarch represents the king as catching ten of those sages, to whom he put riddling questions, such as: "Whether were the dead or the living the more numerous?" to be answered: "The living, for the dead no longer are". Like the Theban Sphinx, Alexander had threatened to put them to death if they answered wrong; but he was so much edified by their wisdom as to dismiss them with rich presents, which must have been rather thrown away on their austerity. At another time he sent a disciple of Diogenes to interview such kindred spirits, but they did not think much of Greek philosophy, and one of them declined to commune with the stranger unless he would strip naked. This native Diogenes, says Plutarch, let himself be tempted to visit Alexander, to whom he gave a very practical object lesson. "He laid a dried and shrivelled hide before him, and first trod upon the edges of it. This he did all round; and as he trod on one side it started up on the other. At last he fixed his feet in the middle, and then it lay still. By this emblem he showed him that he should fix his residence, and plant his principal force, in the heart of his empire, and not wander to the extremities."

That advice seemed worth considering; the ruler of so many lands must have been aware that he had been too long wandering upon the edges of his dominion. From a harbour he formed at the Indus mouth Alexander sent the fleet under Nearchus to sail round into the Persian Gulf, so as to complete for him the circuit of his empire. For want of geographical information he made the costly mistake of leading the bulk of his army through the stony ridges of Baluchistan and the thirsty sands of Mekran. That was his Moscow march, where fiery heat wasted the ranks as did bitter cold for Napoleon's host. The sick were abandoned to an awful death; beasts of burden were slaughtered for food; men and animals were tortured by want of water, in a country which, at one time more flourishing, is now drying up into an actual desert. It was perhaps then, though Plutarch puts it earlier, that a story came to be told recalling Sir Philip Sydney's generosity: a helmet full of priceless water was brought to Alexander, who refused to drink when he saw his men as thirsty as himself, and they might well take new heart to follow such a leader.

Half the army is said to have perished here before the survivors struggled through to the rich southern provinces of Persia, where abundant supplies were awaiting to tempt them to perilous excess. Quintus Curtius perhaps exaggerates in describing Alexander as now minded to play the part of Bacchus returning in triumph from his Eastern wanderings. He had the villages, we are told, strewn with flowers, and wine set out freely at every door past which the conquerors

rolled by in chariots exhibiting their spoils, their heads crowned with garlands, some playing on harps, and there was no stint of meat or drink on this merrymaking progress. "Alexander, with such as he called to his company, was carried in a chariot laden with cups of gold and other golden vessels; and with his drunken army he marched thus seven days together, in ostentation of the prey they had gotten, wherein they showed such dissoluteness that if one thousand of the subdued people had given them the onset, these might have taken them prisoners or led them away in triumph. But fortune, which hath appointed fame and estimation to things, turned all this disorder to his glory; for both the age that was then, and the posterity that came after, marvelled and took it for a wonder that he durst go so dissolutely among those nations not yet established under his empire, the barbarous people reputing his rashness for an assured confidence."

More slowly but more safely came the fleet of Nearchus, making against contrary winds into the Gulf. Alexander is said to have been so much taken by the reports of his admiral, that he designed a further voyage round Arabia and Africa that might bring him back to Europe through the Pillars of Hercules. A wilder plan credited to him was sailing into the Caspian, which he mistook for a branch of the Euxine, and adding Scythia to his empire. "This I can confidently affirm," declares Arrian, "that he meditated nothing small or mean; and that he would never have remained satisfied with any of the acquisitions he had made, even if he had added Europe to Asia, or the islands of the Britons to Europe; but would still have gone on seeking unknown lands beyond. I verily believe that if he had found no one else to strive with, he would have striven with himself." But, whether or no he thus had an eye to anticipating modern discovery, for the present he found his hands full of occupation nearer home.

When, in 324 B.C., Alexander came back to Susa he had been away from it nearly six years, and ten years from Macedonia. During this long absence reports of his death had spread to shake his authority both in Greece and in Persia. His insolent deputies had stirred discontent, sometimes to the point of revolt; here and there they were assuming independence. Scandals and shortcomings were rife throughout the Empire. Harpalus, the officer he had trusted with charge of the treasury, confessed guilt by flying at the king's approach, carrying off a mass of money to finance opposition in Greece. The wonder is that the awe of his name had kept the loosely tied empire together for so long.

He had to set about organizing it afresh, and in this task showed statesmanship as notable as his valour. His idea seems to have been to weld East and West together, with more hope of success than after two thousand years have widened the gulf between their minds. It was now that he married Statira, as if to legitimatize his claim to the throne of Darius, and he encouraged his followers to take Persian brides. Lavish generosity to the veterans did not content them. His generals grumbled when he conferred satrapships and marks of favour upon

native magnates. His Greek soldiers mutinied outright when he proposed to adulterate the phalanx with Asiatic blood, but they repented on his scornfully bidding them leave him to the loyalty of the people they had conquered. He willingly sought to flatter Persian national sentiment, as when he restored the desecrated tomb where a former conqueror had lain under the inscription: "I am Cyrus who was king of Asia; grudge me not the little earth that covers my body".

It looks as if Alexander, had he lived, might have been successful as Cyrus in building up a vast power, of which Greece would have become a mere province. But still this irresistible conqueror could not conquer himself. Before long died his friend and lieutenant, Hephæstion, and the king in his rage of grief is reported to have executed the physician that failed to cure a sickness perhaps made fatal by the drunken habits of the court. The wine of Shiraz flowed too freely for those conquerors. If we are to believe all the extravagances and outbreaks of temper charged upon Alexander by Plutarch, he offered a prize for the deepest drinker at a bout which cost the lives of over forty of his officers. The same authority ascribes his own death to a fever seizing him after a night and a day's carousal. There came afterwards to be whispers of poison, but it seems too likely that he had poisoned his constitution by ruinous excesses. For seeds of death it is not necessary to look beyond the fevers of a swampy and mosquito-haunted land, whose cities at this day exhibit the "Aleppo button" or the "Baghdad button" as a sign of infection in the most wholesome blood.

In the summer of 323 B.C. he arrived at Babylon to busy himself with the equipment of a naval expedition for the exploration and conquest of Arabia. On his way he was met by embassies from far and wide, seeking the favour of one famed as the greatest king alive; also, if we can trust tales that came to be told, by sinister omens forbidding him to enter this city. There, almost at once, he fell sick of a fever; and after a week or two's illness, in the thirteenth year of his reign, died this general who never lost a battle, before reaching the thirty-third year of a life so crowded with glory and achievement. His body was eventually taken to Alexandria, that would prove his most enduring monument.

It was said that on his deathbed, being asked to name an heir for the empire thus vainly won, Alexander had murmured: "To the worthiest!" That was but throwing an apple of strife among his lieutenants. From the first they fell out over the succession to a sway that soon went to pieces. Perdiccas, the general lately standing highest in the king's confidence, persuaded his colleagues to wait for the birth of a posthumous child of the king by Roxana, and when this proved to be a boy, he was proclaimed heir under the name of Alexander. But the common soldiery, looking on him as an Asiatic, were for giving the crown to a half-witted son of Philip, Arrhidæus, now renamed after his father. A compromise was come to by which both these *rois fainéants* should be recognized, power being in the hands of Perdiccas

and Antipater as joint regents. The latter had his hands full, for the news of Alexander's death stirred Greece to a revolt against Macedonia, which Antipater quickly crushed (322 B.C.), when Demosthenes poisoned himself rather than fall into the power of his lifelong bugbear. Soon afterwards Antipater died; then the puppet king, Arrhidæus, was murdered by Olympias, Alexander's mother. She herself came to a violent end at the hands of Cassander, Antipater's son, who seized on the kingdom, and he had also Roxana and her child put to death. Roxana, for her part, had already killed her fellow-widow Statira, whose *alias* of Barsine makes her apt to be confused with Barsine, widow of Mémnon, by whom Alexander had another son, counted as illegitimate.

Perdiccas was soon cut off, when the dead king's generals fell to fighting among themselves, who bear in history the title of the Diadochi, or successors. It would be a hard task to disentangle the incidents of that confused struggle, going on till the end of the century, and later, till from it emerged three great and several smaller powers that for a time proved more or less stable.

Seleucus may be considered the most effective heir of Alexander. To his share fell the conquests in Asia Minor and the task of carrying out here his leader's Hellenizing work. But the Seleucid kings, among whom the name Antiochus became prominent, lost hold on the interior of this dominion, shrinking towards the coast, where their new capital, Antioch, made the centre of a Syrian kingdom, shorn off from the old Assyrian Empire. On its ruins arose minor Hellenized kingdoms such as Pergamum and Pontus, Bithynia and Cappadocia, and Bactria, isolated on the edge of India; while in the background grew up under the barbarian chief Arsaces a warlike power of Parthians that for centuries renewed the martial virtue of the mountaineers led to conquest by Cyrus. When the Romans had conquered the Greek states of Asia they found more formidable foes in the Parthians, who finally were overthrown by a freshly vigorous rising of the Persians. Among the lesser kingdoms the most notable was Pergamum, the old realm of Troy, which owed to Roman patronage a considerable expansion over neighbouring territories, and under its king, Attalus, vied with Alexandria in the fostering of letters through his famous library, to which we owe the word *parchment*.

Ptolemy, said to have been a natural son of Philip, who seems the ablest of Alexander's surviving lieutenants, took Egypt as his share, and the dynasty he founded here flourished among a submissive people. Their capital, Alexandria, became the focus of Greek literature and science after the decay of Athens, and was also a centre of trade that brought upon it the all-absorbing might of Rome. The Ptolemies grew degenerate, to die out with Cleopatra; but the early kings of the line showed wisdom and energy, notably Ptolemy III, who sought to emulate the conquering career of Alexander. With the Seleucid kings of Syria they were often at war, Palestine lying between the two powers as a battleground and prize of contention. This country in the end

passed to Syria, under whose influence it might have been more thoroughly Hellenized but for the fanatical rising of the Maccabees that gave new life to the stubborn Jewish nationality and religion.

Antigonus and Lysimachus were other generals who carried off a share of Alexander's spoils, which they did not long hold. But the descendants of Antigonus in the end seized the kingdom of Macedonia, and the Hellenic headship that went with it. Henceforth the history of Greece is one of fitful struggles against this domination, ending in subjection to a foreign power. Macedonia did good service to her feebler neighbours by making a bulwark for them against a flood of barbarous Gauls that, within half a century after Alexander's death, had almost swamped the centre of civilization, but were turned aside to pour into Asia Minor, where the name of Galatia marks their settlement. Still, however, the Greek states kicked against any master; and two rival leagues among them, the Ætolian and Achæan, which rose up to supplant the venerable Amphictyonic Council, fought with each other as well as with the insolent Macedonians, Sparta trying to assert her old mastery, and the new Greek kingdoms of Asia also interfering at times. Macedonia, on the whole, got the best of these contests, that paved the way for a Roman protectorate. Rome being called in as arbitrator, too late Greek patriotism rallied round Perseus, last king of Macedonia, who at the battle of Pydna (168 B.C.) was carried off to grace the triumph of the consul Æmilius Paulus. From the part of liberator Rome was led on to that of conqueror, till nearly all the regions over which Alexander had spilt the spring of Hellenic civilization became dutifully subject to those new masters of the world.

## CHAPTER IV

# The Rise of Rome (753–266 B.C.)

We now turn back to the power that had been rooting itself in the central Mediterranean peninsula, on which the dawn of history does not broaden till centuries after Greece stands in brightening twilight. Like Greece, Italy first appears as inhabited by a population of dubiously mixed elements. In the north-west, about modern Tuscany, flourished the Etruscans, a nation strong by land and sea, whose monuments begin not to be altogether a dead letter to patient scholars, as yet without assurance as to its origin. The Italian coasts must have been visited early by adventurers from other Mediterranean shores, among whom Greeks came in such numbers to the south end that this took the name of Magna Græcia. What autochthonous stock was displaced, absorbed, or environed by foreign immigrants makes mere guesswork; and here and elsewhere it is impossible to trace the growth of certain names that came to overshadow others long withered in forgetfulness. The name Italy seems slowly to have spread from a southern district, while from a welter of central warfare emerges that of the Latin tribe which was to christen a wide civilization, along with that of a city destined to be for centuries the capital of the world. There appears to be a certain element of chance in this domination of tribal names, by which, for instance, the Angles or the Franks came to denominate a whole gathering of kindred stocks.

As in the case of the Hellenes, Rome's early heroes are too numerous, and for the most part too mythical, to be dealt with but in brief allusion. "Every schoolboy" knows—perhaps not so exactly as in less-examined generations—how, after the taking of Troy, Æneas fled by sea, landing on the coast of Latium, the inheritance of which he won with the hand of the king's daughter Lavinia, and built a new Ilium upon the banks of the Tiber. So his comrade Brutus is said to have voyaged as far as Devon, in proof whereof the stone on which he landed is still shown at Totnes. Such legends led up to the story that made a vestal virgin and the god Mars parents of the twin sons Romulus and Remus, who fell out over the building of Rome. The date of this is put in the middle of the eighth century B.C., about the time when the Athenians would be getting rid of their kings. Romulus was the first of seven kings, all more or less shadowy. We need not dwell on the mild wisdom of Numa Pompilius, nor on the nymph Egeria, who so counselled him that in the reign of this pious founder the temple of Janus was shut, as it would not be again for many an age. The

Romans were indeed sons of Mars; and some hints in its early history point to Rome's beginning as an Adullam sheltering a crew of banditti, who were fain to provide themselves with wives by a raid on their near neighbours the Sabines. The valour of champions like the Horatii availed to swallow up another neighbour, Alba, in the renown of Rome, by accretion, by alliance, and by the fortunes of war growing to prominence among the surrounding tribes. By and by there is some suggestion of foreign subjugation in the name of the first Tarquin, which appears to be of Etruscan if not Greek origin. A hiatus is to be suspected in the legendary chronicle of kings, till, under Servius Tullius, we find a considerable state in process of organization, if it be true that he numbered the population at over 80,000, this census being then fixed to take place every five years, a period known as a Lustrum, and used as a date, like the Olympiads of Greece.

Rome now had its famous seven hills enclosed by seven miles of wall, within which were temples, citadels, and even sewers, as plain testimony of progress from the camp of outlaws with which Latins and Albans had been somehow amalgamated. King Servius has the name of being the political, as Numa the religious, legislator of the new state, and in the former's institutions we catch what was long to be the keynote of Roman domestic politics, a distinction between the privileged class of full citizens and those admitted to a restricted birthright, as strangers or subjects. The quarrel of aristocracy and democracy in Greece was here echoed by patricians and plebeians. Servius Tullius sought to cross-divide these sections into six classes, ranked for taxation and military service by property rather than birth; and in the highest class styled "knights" he admitted plebeians who could afford to take the field on horseback. The classes were subdivided into nearly two hundred centuries, that, like our Saxon "Hundreds", made a nominal unit at once of military and civil aggregation. A former division into thirty so-called tribes was retained for certain purposes, each tribe having its own *Comitia*, or primary meeting, while the Comitia of the centuries formed the general parliament of Rome, yet checked by an appeal to the Comitia Curiata, a gathering more aristocratic in its composition. But the Roman government, as amended by various revolutions, became such a complicated machinery that for full description of it the reader must be referred to more elaborate works. In early days it was so far popular that its legendary kings had to be elected, or confirmed, by a Senate of the aristocracy, who long arrogated to themselves the title of Populus Romanus, till their inferiors claimed a part in that proud device S.P.Q.R. (*Senatus Populusque Romanus*). The natural probability is that such distinction of caste began with the relations of a dominant and a dependent race, as in the case of the Spartans and their helots.

Servius Tullius appears to have leant towards the interest of the masses as opposed to the classes; and this may explain how he came to be slain, according to the legend by his son-in-law, Tarquin the Proud, in a tragedy where his daughter played the part of Lady Macbeth

doubled with that of Goneril. This Tarquin was a usurper probably representing an aristocratic reaction, perhaps a renewed Etruscan domination. His son, Sextus, is said to have "wrought the deed of shame" provoking a revolt of which the hero was that Brutus who had concealed his perilous ambition under a cloak of stupidity or madness, always sacred for superstitious minds. Tarquin was driven away to his Etruscan kinsmen, who made more than one attempt to restore him, favoured by the sympathy of patricians like those sons of Brutus their stern father gave to a traitor's death, but foiled by the courage of many an Horatius Cocles, by the resolution of Mucius Scævola among three hundred comrades who had sworn at all risks to cut off the intruding Lars Porsena, and by the prowess of such high-born warriors as he who came to be known as Coriolanus, winning his first laurels at the decisive battle of Lake Regillus, where Castor and Pollux, on their milk-white steeds, were fabled to have turned the day for Rome. With such good old stories we pass into a clearer light, still shadowed by prodigies and heroisms dear to the young muse of history, who has now brought us to 500 B.C., about the time when Darius would have restored a tyrant to Athens as Porsena sought to force back one on Rome.

The whole legend looks like the shaking off of an Etruscan domination, exercised by a tyrant who left the name of king for ever hateful to the Romans. The Republic then founded had two consuls as its chief magistrates, annually elected, a dual lease of power that commended itself to the Roman as well as the Greek mind. In such a team the stronger character was likely to do more of the pulling, while both consuls went harnessed in constitutional bits and bridles calculated to curb the ambition of ordinary men, yet not always efficient in restraining a masterful spirit under critical circumstances. In times of urgent stress the consular power might be superseded by the temporary appointment of dictators with absolute power, like that Cincinnatus who was fetched from the plough to head his countrymen against a threatening enemy. The original title of the consuls seems to have been prætors; and at one time they were replaced by military tribunes, whose number varied; then later, when distant provinces and long campaigns had to be dealt with, their charge might be prolonged under the name of proconsul. The once proud office, shrunk in functions, lasted long after Rome had lost all but the name of freedom. An older title has proved more enduring, that of the pontiffs, the sacred college, ascribed to Numa Pompilius, that watched over the public religion and its ceremonies till the dignity of *pontifex maximus* passed to the bishop of Rome who became head of half the Christian world. The meaning of the title *Pontifex*, "bridge-maker", seems a hint how Rome may early have gained her importance as guardian of a passage over Italy's central river.

Still it was an aristocratic republic, in which the patricians monopolized honour as well as wealth, and power fell much into the hands of such nobles as Appius Claudius, whose family seem, like the Tarquins,

to have been wealthy strangers welcomed to Rome. In spite of laws, the many found themselves more and more oppressed by the few and indebted to the rich, till early in the fifth century B.C. came the first notable revolt known as Secession of the Plebs. Called on to enlist for a war in which they might expect a larger share of blows than of glory, the plebeians went out *en masse* to a hill near the city, refusing obedience unless their grievances were forthwith redressed. The Senate, fain to try conciliation, sent an envoy, who related to the seceders that fable of the belly and the members that has been used by Shakespeare and many another writer. What was more to the purpose, the plebeians were offered as terms of submission a general cancelling of debts, and for the future protection of their interests the right of electing two new magistrates, Tribunes of the People, whose persons should be sacred, and who should have the power of blocking any law by a simple *veto*. The number of these tribunes was afterwards increased, finally to ten; and in time they became the most powerful of all public bodies.

The solemn treaty then sworn to by the two orders did not always avail to protect the plebs, nor did the first of many agrarian laws secure a fair division of public lands won in war. The common folk continued to feel themselves oppressed, when, about the middle of the century, the constitution had been so wrenched that all its machinery was replaced by a board of Decemvirs charged with drawing up a new code of law, based on Greek models, according to tradition. This code, known as the Ten Tables, is said to have been satisfactory; but the working of it got into the hands of a patrician clique, headed by the insolent Appius Claudius, who added two tables that were less approved, and by their tyranny excited the revolt in which the tragedy of Virginia is so celebrated. Fresh concessions to the plebeians followed another strike for citizenship on their part, among these the important recognition of intermarriages between the two orders, through which in time they would be fused in social rights.

The power of the consuls was now for a time divided between censors and military tribunes, whose functions the patricians sought to keep in their own hands. Additional magistrates were the quæstors, who came to be paymasters, after being ministers of justice; and the ædiles, whose charge was the temples and other buildings of the city. The functions and appointment of these officers varied from age to age, as in time all classes of citizens became eligible for them. The chief offices were distinguished as *curule*, because their holders sat on the "curule chair", that made a republican throne; and they went attended, according to their rank, by a certain number of lictors carrying the *fasces*, bundles of rods bound up round an axe as badges of their authority.

Along with internal dissensions, the young nation had shocks from without, while fitfully it carried on its career of aggrandizement. How restricted as yet was its territory is shown by the fact that one of its most inveterate enemies, the Etruscan city of Veii, stood hardly a dozen

miles from the walls of Rome. After many indecisive wars Veii was taken by the Dictator Camillus, after a siege, or series of attacks, said to have lasted ten years, about the end of the fifth century B.C. This victory broke down a dam against the extension of Rome northwards, while the power of the Etruscan cities in general seems now to have been overwhelmed by a flood of Gaulish invasion.

Before long a host of fair-haired Gauls, led by their Brennus chief, swept down upon Rome itself. Camillus having been banished, like Coriolanus and other patrician leaders, by the ungrateful citizens, the curse he had invoked upon his native city seemed about to be fulfilled. At the river Allia, 10 miles from Rome, its army was cut to pieces (390 B.C.), and the Gauls pressed on to a city which for them offered tempting booty. The dramatic incidents of the legend are familiar: how the rude barbarians paused in awe before the godlike figures of the senators, but, as soon as the spell was broken, made a massacre of those greybeards, with the city for their funeral pile; how the Capitol was saved from a night attack by the cackling of sacred geese; how the survivors, starved out in that citadel, collected gold enough to buy off an enemy not likely to make patient besiegers, then Brennus haughtily threw his sword into the scale, speaking Latin for the nonce, *Væ victis!* ("Woe to the vanquished!"); but how in the nick of time came Camillus, recalled from banishment, to declare that Rome's safety should be bought not by gold but by iron. Under these picturesque circumstances lies the probable fact that Camillus defeated the Gauls, rebuilt the burned city, and came back into popular favour so as to be hailed as Rome's second founder, several times elected to power, till he died of a pestilence such as would ravage this city, like Athens, when the countryfolk crowded within its walls before an invading foe.

There is a hint that the Gauls were driven away from Rome less by arms than by the spread of infection as fatal to those hardy barbarians as were the microbes of our world to the irresistible Martians of Mr. H. G. Wells's romance. Livy owns that the public records were burned at this time, thereby betraying how the authorities of his history may have been popular lays like those Macaulay has reconstituted with so much spirit, or family traditions of such great clans as the Fabii and the Manlii, whose ancestors are made to play so prominent a part. More than one of the Tarquin legends looks like an adaptation from Herodotus. We hear, of course, little or nothing of stories that told against Rome and its heroes. Yet at this time the ruin of the city appears to have been so complete that some proposed to desert it and build up a new state at Veii. All those romantic stories, however, point to the same stern and stubborn temper, sense of public duty, and capacity of patriotic devotion as went to cement the building of Rome's greatness. Never was a chasm opened in her fortunes but some Curtius proved ready to leap into the threatening gulf; no Gaulish Goliath defied her armies without finding some Manlius to stand forth against him as champion; again and again was justified the saying

of Polybius: "Then are the Romans most to be feared when a real danger threatens them".

More than once again Rome had to repel barbarians from the north, whose retreat cleared the way for the extension of her power in that direction. The destruction of the encroaching city might well move its vassals to revolt, and it had now to rivet its yoke afresh on the thirty Latin cities that all along were looked on as more closely tied to the conquerors, its other Italian subjects being marked off as "allies" rather than kinsmen. Through this fourth century it went on gaining further territory in all directions, putting down its old enemies the Volscians to the south, and there coming into collision with the Samnite warriors of the mountain region behind Campania. With them for half a century the Romans waged three fierce wars, the issue of which long hung in suspense. In the second, which lasted twenty years, the Samnite hero Pontius forced a Roman army to surrender in the mountain pass called the Caudine Forks, and there made man by man pass under a yoke of spears set up as badge of humiliation. This disgrace infuriated the beaten power to fresh efforts, till the Samnites in turn were humbled. But when Rome had its hands full of war to the north the Samnites tried another struggle, which ended in their complete subjugation (290 B.C.), their brave leader Pontius having been captured and cruelly put to death. Thus, about the time of Alexander's empire going to pieces, Rome stood up as the strongest power in Italy, still vexed by civil contests, for every accession of territory brought dispute over its division, while the plebs had to be bribed by new concessions to carry out conquests that chiefly profited the class supplying natural leaders in war.

The ruin of Samnite independence put Rome in touch with the southern cities of Magna Græcia, one of the richest of which, Sybaris, still gives its name as a proverb for enervating luxury. The wealth of these Greek commercial states having corrupted their manly vigour so that they were ill able to resist such a pushing neighbour, Tarentum called in a champion from over the sea. This was Pyrrhus, the young King of Epirus, who, born a few years after Alexander, and claiming, like him, to be descended from ancient heroes, had taken that conqueror for his model, as Theseus sought to emulate the feats of his kinsman Hercules. Beginning his military career as a mere boy, he had first to regain his own kingdom, then made an attempt at conquering its neighbour, Macedonia, and next turned his restless energy to Italy, which he invaded, 280 B.C., hoping, as Alexander had done in Asia, to sweep all before him with an army of 20,000 men and a score or so of those elephants that from the East had been added to the military means of Greece.

But in the Romans Pyrrhus found a foe firmer than the unwieldy hosts of Darius, while the Tarentines soon saw their mistake in enlisting as a champion one who had made himself a hard master, pressing their slack-spirited young men into his ranks and putting the city and its pleasures under stern martial law. The first encounter was on the

Photo. Anderson

12

ROMAN INFANTRY AND CAVALRY

From a bas-relief on the pedestal of the column in honour of Antoninus Pius, which stood near Monte Citorio.
Now in the Cortile della Pigna, Vatican, Rome.

Liris (Garigliano), where the astounding elephants trampled down Roman valour; yet, so great was the loss on both sides, Pyrrhus is said to have exclaimed that another such battle would undo him: hence the phrase, a "Pyrrhic victory", as in Greece a "Cadmæan victory" recalled the cost at which Thebes was taken. With warriors like his dead foemen, Pyrrhus declared he could conquer the world; and he offered terms of peace, flung back by the haughty Romans, though he came within a march of their city. The story goes that when Fabricius was sent as envoy about an exchange of prisoners, the king, in vain trying first to bribe then to scare him by the waving of an elephant's trunk over his head, conceived fresh respect for enemies of such a temper, who refused to treat with him unless on condition of his leaving Italy. He drew back to Tarentum, advancing again with so great loss in another battle that he may well have welcomed any excuse for an honourable peace. This is said to have been furnished by the generosity of the Romans, when, one of the king's servants offering to poison him, they sent the traitor to his master with a message that they scorned ridding themselves of an enemy by such base means; then Pyrrhus, not to be outdone in magnanimous courtesy, released his prisoners without ransom, an exchange of good offices that led to a truce.

Pyrrhus now crossed over to Sicily, proposing to expel the Carthaginians who had long struggled for its domination with Greek colonists. But he found the Sicilians so ungrateful and unserviceable allies that after two years he came back to Tarentum. By this time his phalanx of Greek warriors had wasted away, ill-recruited from mercenaries less fit to withstand the Roman legions.[1] He had lost many of his terrible

[1] The organization of a Roman army naturally underwent changes with the developed art of war; but all along it was based upon the *legion*, a division usually of from 4000 to 6000 infantry, with a proportion of cavalry, skirmishers, and the artisans who served it as sappers and artillerymen, as well as a baggage train and camp followers. This body was divided into ten *cohorts*, or battalions, subdivided into three double companies, each wing of which was known as a *century*, though, as a rule, it numbered less than a hundred men, the two together forming a *maniple*, so called apparently from such a *manipulus* or handful of hay as, hoisted on a pole, made the first rude standard for rallying-point. The maniples in early days formed a cross-division, answering to the three lines in which a legion was drawn up, with openings through which the forward companies could retire for shelter or support. In the first line stood the maniples of *Hastati*, the youngest soldiers, who should take off the edge of an enemy's onset. Behind them came the *Principes*, men in the prime of life; and in the third the veteran *Triarii*, brought into action at a decisive moment, like Napoleon's Old Guard. There were also light-armed skirmishers known by such names as *Velites* and *Rorarii*, who in later times were replaced by slingers, archers, and other troops enlisted from conquered peoples. At first every Roman soldier was a Roman citizen, and the auxiliary forces supplied by allies were kept apart; but in time this distinction broke down, even slaves being enlisted in an emergency, till under the Empire a legion might be a medley of all Roman subjects. Still earlier the patriotic defender of his fatherland had given place to the professional soldier.

The consuls, who might be elected without military experience, took command of the principal armies of the republic, the two sometimes acting together, or in disagreement that might end deplorably. Forces would also be trusted to generals known by different titles—Dictator, Prætor, Proconsul, Legatus, &c., who were like to be tried soldiers. What we should call the field officers were the *tribunes*, who seem to have taken command of a legion in turn. The *centurions*, or company officers, may have varied in rank, like the lieutenants of our navy, but in general had the charge of discipline, which they enforced with a vine sapling that made the badge of their office. Each centurion had a subaltern, and an ensign to bear the standard of his company; then, no doubt, trusty men would be chosen for such duties as fall to our non-commissioned officers. The first cohort were jealous guardians of its eagle, the ensign that became emblem of Rome's soaring career over the world.

The rank and file were armed with the short Roman sword and with a heavy-headed javelin called

elephants, too, and the Romans had learned how to kill or capture the rest. So when again he met them it was to be routed at Maleventum, renamed Beneventum in memorial of that deliverance for Rome (275 B.C.). Pyrrhus sailed away with the remnants of his army, soon to find an inglorious death in wars nearer home: he is said to have been killed by a tile a woman hurled on his head at Argos.

Victorious Rome went on to take in the Greek cities of Magna Græcia, while in the north she pushed her conquests towards the Alps. In a few years she had made herself mistress of all Italy, beginning already to fetter this dominion with such military roads as still are monuments of her greatness. Her name resounded over the world, and her alliance was courted by foreign nations. But now, as Pyrrhus had foretold, she ran into perilous collision with the great sea power of the Mediterranean, Carthage, that presented itself as a natural rival for the lordship of Sicily lying like a football between them. Their struggle lasted for a century, with such vicissitudes that for a time the genius of one man came near to fixing the yoke of Africa upon southern Europe.

the *pilum*; the young Hastati, however, were so called as carrying a lighter spear, *hasta*. The fully-armed men had large oblong shields, helmets, greaves, and leather jerkins armoured with bands of metal. In addition to this weight of arms the Roman soldier marched under a heavy load of rations, cooking utensils, and tools for throwing up the entrenched camps that played such an important part in Roman warfare.

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## CHAPTER V

# Hannibal (247–182 B.C.)

A small Tunisian headland still bears the name of Cape Africa, that has spread over a whole continent, beyond its rim a dark one up to our own times. A little to the north, behind a bathing-place of the Gulf of Tunis, where the chief structure now is a French cathedral in memory of St. Louis, the broken piers and arches of a Roman aqueduct and choked-up reservoirs turned to dens for slinking Arabs, are the most noticeable remains of Carthage, once, with perhaps a million of inhabitants, the mistress of the western Mediterranean, till ruined in its long struggle with Rome for lordship of the world. That the African city had almost overthrown that rival was due to Hannibal, whose life makes the sunset glow of its history.

Not to dwell on tales of Dido as its legendary founder, Carthage was the most flourishing colony of the Phœnicians, a name clipped in the Roman mouth to *Pœni*, with *Punic* as its adjective form. This Semitic people, whose original habitat may be uncertain, come into historic ken as seated on the Syrian coast, where, from harbours like Tyre and Sidon, they launched out as the most enterprising mariners and traders of the historic ancient world, who, as skilful miners as shipbuilders, by their wealth and arts helped to adorn Solomon's Temple. The hieroglyphic writing of Egypt they seem to have developed as an alphabet which their commercial relations with Greece introduced into Europe. They sailed to India on the one hand, and on the other as far as Britain; it is even supposed that they circumnavigated Africa. On its northern coast they made several settlements, one of the oldest, Utica, from which Carthage may have been originally an offshoot. When the mother state was overcome by Alexander, a large number of its inhabitants made their escape to Carthage, which had been swallowing up other colonies on the Barbary coast and extending her power so as to be to Tyre much what the United States are in respect to Britain.

The city was built on a peninsula projecting into the Gulf of Tunis, enclosed by walls apparently some twenty miles in circuit. The strongest line of fortification ran across the neck between two stagnant lakes, where Carthage could be attacked by land. Here was a triple bulwark of thick masonry crowned by lofty towers, having behind them stabling for hundreds of the elephants and thousands of the cavalry that were the strength of a Carthaginian army. There were two artificial harbours, one within the other, opening into the roomy natural haven

of Tunis, since then shallowed by a silting that has altered the coast line. Among close-packed poorer quarters rose massive palaces and temples, enriched by precious woods and metals and works of art, the spoils of war or commerce. Perhaps Gustave Flaubert does not draw much on imagination when he describes an army revelling in the gardens of Hannibal's father, Hamilcar.

The officers, wearing brazen boots, had taken their place in the middle walk, under a gold-fringed purple awning stretched out from the wall of the stables to the first terrace of the palace; while the common soldiers spread themselves under the trees, among which appeared a number of flat-roofed buildings, wine-presses, cellars, storehouses, bakehouses, and workshops, with a yard for the elephants, pits for the wild beasts, a prison for the slaves. The kitchens were surrounded by fig trees; a grove of sycamores extended to masses of verdure, where pomegranates shone among white cotton-tufts; vines, loaded with grapes, climbed up pine branches; a field of roses bloomed under plane trees; here and there lilies nodded upon patches of turf; the paths were strewn with black sand mingled with powdered coral; and through the centre the cypress avenue made a double colonnade as of green obelisks. The palace, built of yellow-flecked Numidian marble, rose above all from its broad foundations, supporting four terraced stories. With its grand straight staircase of ebony wood, showing at the corner of each step the prow of a captured galley, its red portals quartered in black, the bronze gratings that below kept out scorpions, and the trelliswork of gilded rods that closed the upper openings, in its barbarous opulence it seemed to the soldiers as solemn and impenetrable as the face of Hamilcar.—*Salammbô.*

Gradual had been the growth of such wealth and power, for at first the Carthaginians were content with a tributary footing among the ruder peoples whom they afterwards reduced to vassalage. In the time of Pyrrhus they had become supreme along the Barbary coast, as over the western islands of the Mediterranean and the nearest ports of Spain, besides more disputed holds in Sicily. Yet their empire was not firmly founded. Unlike the Romans, who knew how to win loyalty after submission, they made hated masters, showing no consideration for their subjects, and using their conquests chiefly to recruit a host of slaves as well as the mercenary soldiers to whom these rich traders trusted for offence and defence. Their government appears to have been an oligarchy, with two nominal princes styled Suffetes. Their religion was a cruel superstition, Moloch and other fearsome deities being propitiated by human sacrifices, as happened only in exceptional cases at Rome. Crucifixion was a common punishment, not only for malefactors, but for unfortunate politicians. Their wealth maintained a fleet of warships, the main power of a state that found its most stubborn enemies in the Greek colonists with whom it had long warred for domination over Sicily, till thus it came also in collision with the Romans.

Here brought into closer relations, at first these two powers appear to have shown politic civility to each other; but Sicily was too tempting a prize not to set them on the tug-of-war. Hiero, one of the followers

GALLIA
Pyrenaei Mts.
VOLCÆ
SALYES
MASSILIA
Emporiae
ILERGETES
VACCÆI
CELTIBERI
VETTONES
CARPETANI
LUSITANIA
HISPANIA
Durius
Iberus F.
Tagus
Segontum
Arsis
Baecula
Illiturgis
Bætis F.
Carthago Nova
Gades
Fretum Gaditanum
BALEARES INS.
CORSICA
SARDINIA
MARE INTERNUM
MARE TYRRHENUM
MARE ADRIATICUM
ILLYRICUM
EPIRUS
Corcyra
ITALIA
LIGURIA
TAURINI
Mediolanium
Cremona
Placentia
Padus F.
Ariminum
Metaurus F.
Sena
Macra F.
Arnus F.
Tiberis F.
ROMA
LATIUM
LUCANIA
Panormus
Messana
Rhegium
Locri
Lilybaeum
Agrigentum
SICILIA
Syracusae
Melita
Utica
CARTHAGO
Bagradas F.
Zama?
Thapsus
AFRICA
NUMIDIA
MASSYLII
MAURETANIA
Neapolis
Syrtis Minor
Emporia
SYRTIS MAIOR
ROME AND CARTHAGE
IN THE 1ST AND 2ND PUNIC WARS
Boundary of Carthage at the beginning of the 1st Punic War, B.C. 264
Carthaginian losses between 264 & 218 = Sicily, Sardinia & Corsica
Boundary of New possessions in Spain added between 237 & 218
Carthaginian losses during the 2nd War
Roman possessions & Allies at the beginning of the 2nd War, B.C. 218
Hannibal's Route from Carthago Nova to Cannae
English Miles
0 50 100 200
John Bartholomew & Co. Edinr.

of Pyrrhus, had established himself as ruler of Syracuse, when a band of Italian adventurers calling themselves the Mamertines, "Sons of Mars", made a lodgment in Sicily at the modern Messina, and when threatened with expulsion by Hiero appealed for help to Rome. This excuse the Romans took for interfering in the chronic wars of Sicily; an army crossed the strait, to come soon to blows with the Carthaginians and their ally, Hiero, who afterwards changed sides as an ally of the winning power. Thus, in 265 B.C., began the First Punic War.

The Roman valour and discipline got the best of it on land, though the foe was superior in cavalry and in troops of elephants carrying on their backs towers filled with slingers and archers, also, for a time, in the mastery of the sea. But the ambitious republic had set itself to build ships of war, tradition making its first model a wrecked Carthaginian trireme, so called as having three banks of oars; then by and by it added five-banked galleys to a fleet which did not fear to challenge that of the city then ruling the waves. So readily did its soldiers adapt themselves to sailoring that the Carthaginians were defeated in a naval battle off Sicily, when five years' fighting had left them besieged in their fortresses on the island. This victory is said to have been due to the device of grappling irons, by which boarders could tackle the Punic crews at close quarters for hand-to-hand fighting.

Such success encouraged Rome to carry the war into Africa. After another victory at sea a Roman army landed near Tunis, and at first swept all before it, for the oppressed subjects and slaves of Carthage rallied round the legions as deliverers. So contemptible seemed their foe that half the Roman army was rashly recalled, the consul, Regulus, being left to finish the campaign with less than 20,000 men. Meanwhile Carthage had gathered a strong force of mercenaries, under the Spartan general Xantippus, by whom Regulus was overwhelmingly defeated and made prisoner (255 B.C.) near Tunis. One of the most famous legends of Rome, into the truth of which we need not enquire too critically, represents Regulus as sent home, after five years' captivity, on promise to return if he could not persuade his countrymen to peace; but he himself took the lead in urging them to press the war; then, heedless of his friends' entreaties and the tears of his family, tore himself away to meet a cruel death at Carthage, faced, according to Horace, as calmly as if he were starting on a country excursion.

Atqui sciebat quae sibi barbarus
Tortor pararet: non aliter tamen
  Dimovit obstantes propinquos,
    Et populum reditus morantem,
Quam si clientum longa negotia
Dijudicata lite relinqueret,
  Tendens Venafranos in agros,
    Aut Lacedaemonium Tarentum.[1]

[1] "And yet, well aware what barbarous tortures were in store for him, he pushed aside his kinsmen and the crowd that hindered his return, as calmly as if, having got through a lawsuit, he were leaving the weary business of his clients for a jaunt to the fields of Venafrum, or to Tarentum, founded by Sparta."

The war lingered on till 241 B.C., both parties growing tired of it. The Romans had heavy losses by sea, but built another great fleet that at last crushed that of Carthage. On land they were foiled by the Suffete Hamilcar Barca, a statesman and general who had to contend with a peace party at home headed by Hanno. Ill-backed as he was by his own countrymen, he entrenched himself on a height behind Palermo, and held this position so stoutly that in the end the Romans were fain to make peace on condition of his evacuating Sicily alone, whereas they had begun by demanding all the Carthaginian colonies.

Then before long Rome took a chance of exasperating the rancour of defeat that was to hatch the greater Second Punic War. Carthage had almost been brought to ruin by the revolt of her army of mercenaries when their pay was withheld by the bankrupt state. Hamilcar, returning to be put in power at home, had a long and hard task in quelling this mutiny; and while he was thus engaged the Romans seized Sardinia and Corsica. Unable to stir up his countrymen to face their great enemy again, he crossed to Spain, there to spend the rest of his life in gaining new dominions, extended from the colony of New Carthage, the modern Carthagena. With him went his young son, Hannibal, on whom as a child he is said to have imposed an oath of eternal hatred to the Romans; and it appears that Hamilcar's design was to win firm footing in Spain for the attack carried out by that more famous heir of his plans.

Born about 247 B.C., Hannibal was not out of his teens at the death of his father, yet already such a good soldier as to be put in command of the cavalry under Hasdrubal,[1] Hamilcar's son-in-law, who succeeded him, and pursued his policy of consolidating the Carthaginian power in Spain. When Hasdrubal was assassinated, a few years later, the army acclaimed as their chosen leader the young hero whose martial qualities are thus described by a hostile historian:—

> Never was the same nature more apt for the very different parts, to obey and to command; so it is hard to say whether he were dearer to his general or to the army: no one else did Hasdrubal pick out for command in any brave and arduous enterprise, and no other leader better drew out the trust and courage of his men. Brave as he was in undertaking perils, in the midst of them he showed himself not less considerate. Both his mind and body rose above every exertion: heat and cold he could bear alike; and his diet was regulated by the needs of nature rather than dainty appetite. He had no fixed time for sleep, either day or night; what hours he could spare from toil he gave to rest, and that taken not in silence or softness: wrapped in his cloak, he was often seen sleeping on the ground among the outposts and sentinels. In dress he did not outshine his comrades, all his display was in horses and weapons. Either of the cavalry or the infantry, he was far the best soldier: he led the way into battle, and was last to quit the field. But

[1] *Bal* in these names is connected with the Carthaginian deity *Baal*, apparently an attribute of high descent. Carthaginian names are repeated in a confusing manner: Hannibal had for brothers Hasdrubal and Mago, the former of whom must be distinguished from his brother-in-law and from another Hasdrubal, a hero of the battle of Cannæ, as Hanno, Hamilcar's rival, from two Hannos who were lieutenants of Hannibal. Both these names, indeed, often turn up in the history of Carthage.

HANNIBAL'S ARMY CROSSING THE RHONE

*From the painting by Henri Motte*

these virtues were equalled by his vices, inhuman cruelty, a more than Punic want of faith, no regard for truth or sanctity, no fear of the gods, no respect for an oath, no sense of religion.—*Livy.*

Meanwhile Rome, taking the place of Carthage as mistress by sea, had been putting down pirates in the Adriatic, meddling in the affairs of Greece, and reducing the fierce Gauls in the north of Italy. The haughty republic saw with suspicion those Carthaginian advances in Spain, which, she gave notice, were to be bounded by the Ebro. As if on purpose to pick a quarrel, Hannibal attacked the strong and rich city of Saguntum, south of this river indeed, yet proclaimed to be under Roman protection. Its powerful ally withheld help through the difficult siege, but when Saguntum had fallen (219 B.C.) Rome sent an embassy to Carthage demanding that Hannibal should be given up in satisfaction for such an affront. As the Carthaginian Senate seemed to hesitate, the envoy, Q. Fabius, gathered up his toga into two folds, asking if they would have peace or war. "Which you will," was the answer; then the Roman shook out one fold that made the symbol of war, and the challenge was received with a shout of defiance. Such a dramatic scene is presented as prologue to the Second Punic War, in which Hannibal's hope was to unite all its aggrieved neighbours for the crushing of Rome.

For this struggle Hannibal had long been secretly preparing, and in the spring of 218 B.C. he marched from New Carthage with over 100,000 men on a roundabout route for Rome. Beyond the Ebro he had to clear his way through fierce Catalan tribes; then, the Pyrenees passed, he found fresh enemies in Gauls of the Rhone, who hotly disputed his passage of the river, which he crossed as high up as Avignon, giving a wide berth to Massilia (Marseilles) near its mouth, an ancient Greek colony then occupied by Roman troops. Other Gauls, however, came forward to welcome the enemy of Rome and to supply him with guides over the Alps, an enterprise held as impossible for a regular army.

It is disputed which pass Hannibal took; but most historians incline to trace his march by the Little St. Bernard. In any case the undertaking was a stupendous one. Half the year had been spent on fighting his way so far; and the crossing had to be made in cold autumn weather, amid formidable natural obstacles, garrisoned by hostile mountaineers who hurled down rocks upon his struggling march, as the Tyrolese, under Hofer, tried to crush Napoleon's columns. The legend that Hannibal now melted the Alpine rocks by vinegar is supposed to have originated in the misunderstanding of a Greek word which possibly implied some kind of explosive. He had reached the Alps with forces reduced by half through battles by the way and the need of keeping up communications on the long route from Spain; then so great were his losses on the arduous crossing that no more than some 25,000 starving men could he lead down to the plains of Piedmont.

So little did the Romans guess his bold design that one consular army, under Sempronius, had been sent to Sicily, while that of Scipio was directed to attack Hannibal in Spain. The latter consul, luckily delayed, was at Marseilles when he heard of the enemy's movements in the valley of the Rhone, where a vain effort was made to come up with them. Astonished next by news of Hannibal's appearance south of the Alps, Scipio re-embarked to land his troops in Liguria, the coast of Genoa, and marched to meet the enemy in the Po valley, while Sempronius was recalled from Sicily to gain the other end of Italy by forced marches.

Fortunately for Rome, Hannibal had reached this region in no state to push his adventure vigorously. His horses were starved, he had hardly saved the elephants that made the strength of his army. One Celtic tribe, the Insubres, hailing him as a deliverer, brought in recruits and supplies; but their neighbours and natural enemies, the Taurini, stood by the Roman yoke, and he had to lay siege to their chief town, the modern Turin, before advancing on the fortress of Placentia. Here Scipio had fixed himself, but rashly sallied out against the invader; and in a first encounter on the Ticinus, the Carthaginian cavalry drove back the Romans to their stronghold, one of those entrenched camps that so often served them against this invader.

With a severe wound to make him cautious, Scipio held his camp, where he blocked Hannibal's further progress, but declined a pitched battle till joined by his colleague Sempronius. Hannibal, for his part, also showed inactivity, if not want of boldness, in failing to prevent the consuls coming together. Then soon Scipio's caution was overborne by the rashness of Sempronius, eager to distinguish his consulate by a battle at the end of its year. The Romans let themselves be tempted into an ambush on the banks of the Trebia, where, in bitterly cold weather, they were defeated with the loss of more than half the army. A blinding and benumbing storm, on which they blamed the disaster, seems to have saved them from annihilation.

This signal victory cleared away some of Hannibal's difficulties. The Gauls now flocked to his standard in thousands, so that he could more than double his army by auxiliaries, keener for fight and plunder, indeed, than ready to submit to discipline. The Romans had learned to recognize him as a formidable enemy. Yet he was too well aware how he stood, cut off in an enemy's country with scanty resources. Greece, where he had calculated to find allies, gave no sign of coming to his aid. The Roman command of the sea hindered communications with his base of operations in Spain, which might soon be lost altogether, for, amid defeats at home, Rome kept strengthening her army that had been landed to attack the Spanish colonies. All along Carthage sent little help to her champion. The Africans who were the core of his force could not well stand the cold of Italian mountain ridges, now to be crossed in a hard winter. The elephants were perishing, on which he had counted to trample down the Roman legions. His barbarous recruits were always apt to mutiny or desert.

The glory of this great general is that he did so much with such poor means.

In next year's campaign (217 B.C.), his powerful enemy played into his hand; as all along appeared the weakness of the consular division of authority. The consuls of this year were Servilius and Flaminius, elected respectively by aristocratic and democratic sympathies, and ill disposed to work together. Their charge was to keep Hannibal behind the Apennines, upon which he advanced when he had licked his motley army into shape. Both consuls acting independently, the inexperienced Flaminius let himself be lured at Lake Trasimenus, the modern Perugia, into a battle fought so fiercely that the soldiers are said not to have noticed an earthquake which shook the ground beneath their feet. There again the Roman army was cut to pieces with its rash general, when his colleague, Servilius, saw nothing for it but to fall back on Rome.

Again, as after the news of Scipio's defeat, consternation reigned in the great city, that soon, however, took new heart to hold back such a doughty foe. Taught by those disasters, the Romans now chose as dictator Quintus Fabius Maximus, a veteran who earned the honourable nickname of *Cunctator* by the prudent caution of his operations —*cunctando restituit rem* ("his slowness brought back success"). Avoiding a pitched battle, he hung on the heights to follow Hannibal as he advanced southwards, the invader harassed and threatened at every step, but never able to tempt his watchful adversary from a strong position. Once, for his part, Fabius had almost caught the invaders at disadvantage in an Apennine pass, but their wily leader rescued them from this trap by the stratagem of driving on the heights by night a great herd of oxen with lights tied to their horns, which deceived the Romans into taking this for the Carthaginian army, that was meanwhile slipping off through the pass.

The Fabian policy has passed into a proverb, successful as it now was in wearing out the strength of an army cut off from reinforcements, and with no stronghold to fall back on. Hannibal, while he kept his Roman prisoners in chains, had released those made from the allies, hoping thus to draw their favour to himself. But as yet Rome's vassals proved mainly loyal to their old master, none the less so for the exactions and devastations wrought by Hannibal on the country, from which he had to wring subsistence for his army. Even when, passing beyond Rome, he turned into the Samnite highlands, where a grudge against the dominant neighbour might be expected to smoulder, he could not at first blow it up into flame. He had no better welcome from the cities of Campania and Apulia on either side of the Apennine ridge. And wherever he went Hannibal found himself dogged by Fabius, of whom he spoke bitterly as a cloud hanging over him on the mountains, ready to burst in hail and wind, while the metaphor put into the mouth of Fabius was that the invader should be allowed to burn himself out.

But instead of leaving Fabius to himself, the Romans began to

cry out for more dashing generalship; and his Master of the Horse, Minucius Rufus, was appointed to equal command in the Dictator's grumbling army. Before long this aspiring hero was taken aback by Hannibal, and would have been crushed had not Fabius come to his help; then Minucius, not to be outdone in generosity, gave up his share of the divided authority. Fabius now laying down his dictatorship, the new consuls had sense enough to follow his policy for the rest of the year; and a steadfast adherence to it might have ended the war, had not Rome again grown impatient to cut out this thorn in its side.

In 216 B.C. rival politicians were once more yoked in the consulship, Aemilius Paulus and Varro, the latter said to have been a butcher, and of no better qualifications for bloodshed. With an army nearly 100,000 strong, they crossed the mountains to Apulia, above the heel of the boot that makes Italy's shape, where they might expect an easy victory over Hannibal's troops, half their number, starving and slinking about this coast, perhaps in some hope of relief from Carthage by sea. The consuls again were at odds, the boastful Varro treating the prudence of his colleague as cowardice. It seems incredible that the Romans should have not seen the folly of a custom that put each consul in command, day about. Varro, taking his turn, resolved, against the protest of his colleague, to engage Hannibal on the plain of Cannae, near the mouth of the Aufidus, where Rome now suffered the greatest defeat of the whole war. More than half the army was destroyed, at least 50,000 killed, with most of the leaders, besides a mob of prisoners, afterwards butchered in cold blood. Hannibal is said to have sent home to Carthage three bushels of gold rings taken from the fingers of Roman knights. The slaughter in those ancient hand-to-hand battles was of course much greater in proportion than with our more deadly weapons that prevent close encounter, and it may easily be conceived how the beaten army, packed into a flying mob, made easy carnage for the victors.

The Roman columns on the right and left, finding the Gaulish and Spanish foot advancing in a convex line or wedge, pressed forwards to assail what seemed the flanks of the enemy's column; so that, being already drawn up with too narrow a front by their original formation, they now became compressed still more by their own movements, the right and left converging towards the centre, till the whole army became one dense column, which forced its way onwards by the weight of its charge, and drove back the Gauls and Spaniards into the rear of their own line. Meanwhile its victorious advance had carried it, like the English column at Fontenoy, into the midst of Hannibal's army: it had passed between the African infantry on its right and left; and now, whilst its head was struggling against the Gauls and Spaniards, its long flanks were fiercely assailed by the Africans who, facing about to the right and left, charged it home and threw it into utter disorder. In this state, when they were forced together into one unwieldy crowd, and already falling by thousands, whilst the Gauls and Spaniards, now advancing in their turn, were barring further progress in front, and whilst the Africans were tearing their mass to pieces on both flanks, Hasdrubal with his victorious

Gaulish and Spanish horsemen broke with thundering fury upon their rear. Then followed a butchery such as has no recorded equal, except the slaughter of the Persians in their camp when the Greeks forced it after the battle of Plataea. Unable to fight or fly, with no quarter asked or given, the Romans and Italians fell before the swords of their enemies, till, when the sun set upon the field, there were left out of that vast multitude no more than 3000 men alive and unwounded; and these fled in straggling parties, under cover of the darkness, and found a refuge in the neighbouring towns. The consul Aemilius, the proconsul Cn. Servilius, the late master of the horse M. Minucius, two quaestors, twenty-one military tribunes, and eighty senators, lay dead amidst the carnage: Varro with seventy horsemen had escaped from the rout of the allied cavalry on the right of the army, and made his way safely to Venusia.—Dr. Arnold's *History of Rome.*

Never, declares Livy, were the streets of Rome filled with such terror and tumult, as when the first fugitives from Cannae brought their tale of ruin. For a moment it appeared as if the city lay at Hannibal's mercy, and he has been blamed by historians for not following the advice of his impetuous lieutenant, Maharbal, to push on at the heels of the routed army. But he knew how, without the machinery used in sieges of that day, he would be brought to a stand before Rome's strong fortifications, while troops rallied from all sides to environ him. And the Romans, once more recovering from their first mood of panic, again showed their native resolution. When Varro came spurring back with a few hundred horsemen, instead of being welcomed by execrations, the story goes that he was thanked for not having despaired of the public weal. Yet Livy, while exalting the pride of his countrymen, admits that in this emergency they were fain to arm thousands of slaves and criminals as soldiers, and that wretched captives were buried alive to propitiate invisible powers hostile to Rome. At the same time the stern government refused to treat with Hannibal for the ransom of his prisoners, condemning them as worthy to be slaves; and the rank and file of the fugitives, less fortunate than their beaten leader, were punished as having disgraced themselves.

Whatever truth be in Livy's rather inconsistent account, it must have been a relief to the Romans when they heard of their bugbear as turned aside into Campania, where now he found some support from the inhabitants, and in particular the rich city of Capua opened its gates to him as a deliverer. The winter he spent in this luxurious city, second of Italy only to Rome, is proverbially said to have demoralized his army, which as yet showed little sign of demoralization. His prospects were brightening from various quarters. Stirred by the news of Cannae, Carthage at last sent him supplies of men and money, and, what was important, of elephants. Philip of Macedon undertook to come to his aid in Italy. The Roman allies in the south were now found willing to revolt. From the Alps Celtic recruits poured down to join the victor of Cannae, and a Roman army sent to hold back those Gauls had been destroyed in the northern forests. Only in Spain and Sardinia were the arms of Rome successful, so that Hannibal lost his

original base, and had to lean on the south of Italy and the fleet with which Carthage once more put out her strength at sea. But her general was baffled in his attempts to seize the Greek Neapolis, that once "New City" of Naples, at present the largest in Italy, which might have served him as a convenient harbour.

Fabius had again been made dictator, and resumed the cautious policy which won him the title "shield of Rome", while its "sword" was Marcellus, who presently came to the front by beating off that redoubtable enemy in an attack on Nola. During the next three years it is difficult to trace the movements of Hannibal, who, by consummate generalship alone, it would appear, held southern Italy, threatened and hampered at every step. The wonder is how he was able to maintain himself so long against a power that had hundreds of thousands of soldiers on foot, scattered indeed over a wide field of action. The revolt of the southern cities began to die out, all along half-hearted, for the aristocratic faction often stood by Rome, if the democrats hailed a new ruler, who, as in the case of Pyrrhus, soon made himself unwelcome by his exactions. The expected aid from Philip of Macedon was cut off when the Romans carried war into his own country. Reinforcements promised from Carthage were diverted to Spain, where the two brothers Scipio for a time threatened to overwhelm Hasdrubal's forces, and hindered him from marching to join his own brother.

While in the north Rome had also to hold down the restless Gauls and some doubtful subjects in Etruria, before long she found another enemy on her hands. Her old ally, Hiero of Syracuse, dying, had been succeeded by his grandson, Hieronymus, a youth whose foolish ambition led him into making alliance with Carthage. He was soon removed from the scene by assassination; but a revolt against Rome spread over the island, which drew off an army under Marcellus from the mainland. The great event of this war was the long siege of Syracuse, defended through the skill of Archimedes, famous mathematician and engineer of that day, who is said to have destroyed the Roman ships by huge burning-glasses, to have hauled them out of the sea by grapples at the end of long cranes, and to have sunk them by stones or masses of lead dropped from similar engines. The siege appears to have lasted nearly two years; but at last Syracuse was taken and sacked, Archimedes, whom Marcellus had ordered to be spared, being slain by a soldier who found him absorbed in study. The city yielded rich booty in its treasures of art sent to Rome; but its fall did not smother the insurrection of Sicily, kept alive by Hannibal's achievements across the strait, where he held his ground by dint of dexterous manœuvring in the southern end, when no longer able to sweep over Italy like an overwhelming storm.

He meanwhile had captured the harbour of Tarentum, and more than once he defeated Roman generals who forgot the Fabian rule of caution. But his forces were wearing themselves out in those three years. In 211 B.C. he failed to relieve Capua from a Roman investment, and tried in vain to draw off the enemy by marching to Rome,

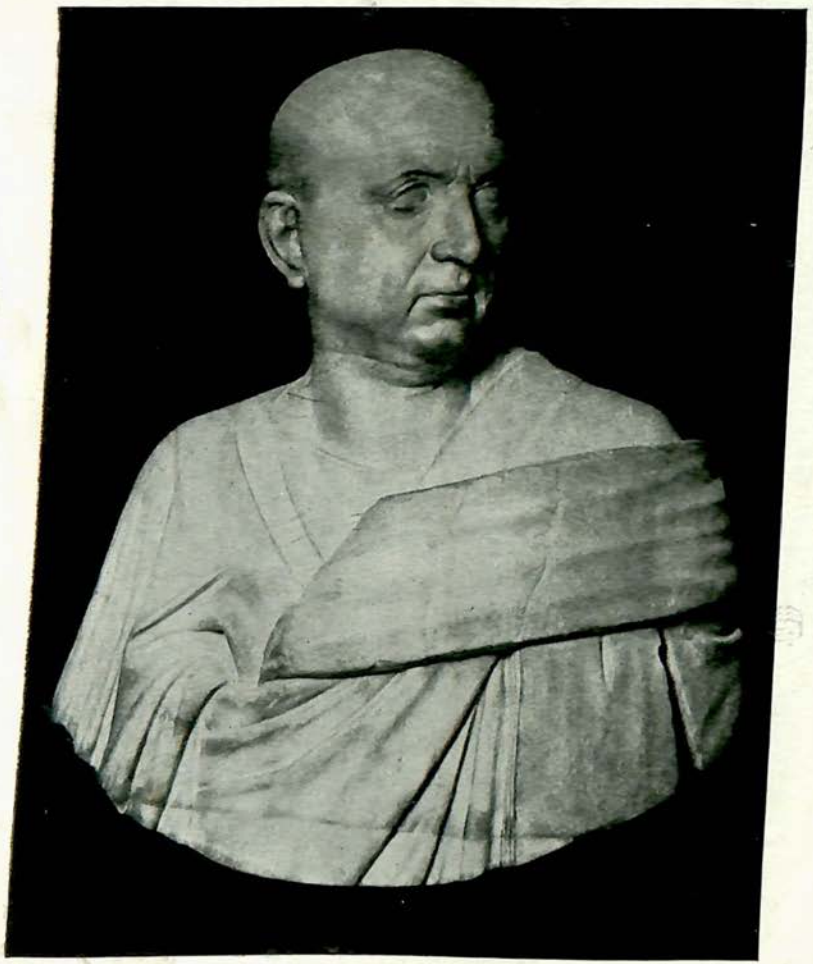

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Photo. Brogi

PUBLIUS CORNELIUS SCIPIO AFRICANUS

*Marble bust in the Uffizi Gallery, Florence*

According to Livy, Scipio was at one time the possessor of luxuriant hair. In old age he appears to have become bald and to have shaven clean.

Photo. Brogi

HANNIBAL

*Marble bust in the Naples Museum*

It is not certain that this bust from Capua represents the Carthaginian leader, but it is generally supposed that such is the case.

which now he saw for the first time, only to retreat after encamping at its gates and giving it a moment of needless alarm. Capua fell, punished with signal cruelty, as an example not thrown away on other states, that now began to drop off from the invader. To balance this loss, Rome had a great reverse in Spain, where her army was annihilated by Hasdrubal, the two Scipios being slain. On the other hand, the revolt of Sicily could at last be crushed, after Marcellus had been recalled to check Hannibal in Italy.

The next two campaigns were signalized by Tarentum falling back into the hands of the Romans, and by the death of Marcellus in a chance encounter. And now appeared the young hero who was to have the glory of ending this war, Publius Scipio, already distinguished by having saved the life of his father, Cornelius Scipio, at its first combat on the Ticino. After the disaster to his father and uncle, he was appointed to succeed them in Spain, where he turned the tables by capturing New Carthage, and did not less to destroy the Carthaginian dominion through a kindness and courtesy that went to win the hearts of the proud natives, in contrast to the ruthlessness with which Marcellus had quelled Sicily. But though he occupied Hasdrubal's seat of operations, Scipio was unable to prevent him from leaving Spain with a large army, following Hannibal's route over the Pyrenees and the Alps to join his brother in South Italy.

Here, 207 B.C., Hannibal stood still undefeated, till at last the consul Nero could claim a victory which seems not to have been decisive. In Apulia, that made the chief field of these campaigns, the two armies were watching each other like cat and mouse, when Nero heard of Hasdrubal as already in the valley of the Po. The importance of preventing the junction of the two brothers drove the consul to prompt action on his own responsibility. Leaving part of the army in one of those fortified camps that had so often availed to check Hannibal, with the flower of it he set out on a rapid march to strengthen his fellow consul, Livius, in the north. By their united forces, Hasdrubal was defeated and slain on the Metaurus, an Umbrian river flowing into the Adriatic, where he had come within 200 miles of Hannibal. Nero hurried back to his own command; and the first message Hannibal had of the disaster was his brother's head hurled into his camp, a barbarous return for the Carthaginian's care to give his slain foes honourable burial. For the first time in this gloomy war, the consuls rode in triumph into Rome, once more saved from imminent danger.[1]

Livy describes Hannibal as taking that gory head for a sign of

[1] A Triumph was the highest honour granted to a Roman general for signal victory over a public enemy. The victor expectant of such a reward must not enter the city till invited by the senate to exhibit himself in a stately procession displaying the trophies and spoils of his conquest, along with a train of captives, their leaders being sometimes butchered to grace the occasion, as well as white oxen sacrificed at the temple of Jupiter. To this temple on the Capitoline Hill, the hero of the day was drawn in a four-horsed chariot, his head wreathed with laurel, and over it a crown was held by a slave, who is said also to have had the duty of whispering in his ear to bid him remember, at the height of glory, that he was no more than a man. An Ovation was a sort of second-class triumph, so called from the *oves*, sheep, that made its victims.

doom to Carthage. Heavy at heart under the blow, he yet kept his head, drawing back towards Bruttium, the rugged toe of Italy, where he held out four years longer, his chief stronghold an entrenched camp on the promontory now called Cape Nau, near the Greek city of Croton. No more help came to him from Carthage; but after two years his brother Mago collected in the Balearic isles a force with which he landed in Liguria, trying to follow the steps of Hasdrubal, only to meet the same fate, when, failing to gather much support from the Gaulish tribes, he had advanced no farther than Milan. By this time Hannibal had lost hope of mastering Rome; and if he still clung to his mountain stronghold in Calabria, it may have been as fearing his fellow countrymen, among whom crucifixion might be the welcome of an unsuccessful general.

The struggle had now lasted a dozen years, spreading ravage and distress over Italy, where in the south it was exasperated as a civil war. The continual drain of men and money was enormous, while food often rose to famine prices, as Hannibal on his devious marches laid waste the fields from which the Roman cities were supplied. Even loyal colonies had to protest that they could no longer send support to Rome; yet many earned her gratitude by the firm faith that made them exhaust all their resources in the republic's cause. At Rome, too, there were moments of despairing revolt under the burden of war-taxes and of military service; but on the whole this people stood the long stress with a spirit that showed it worthy of empire. The poor had the sorest suffering to bear, when the rich showed their patriotic pride in loans to the state, or in throwing their gold and silver plate into the public treasury. Now the strain of war on Rome began to be relaxed; and we may suppose how it would be felt by the allies of Hannibal, henceforth pent up in a corner of Italy.

Meanwhile, Publius Scipio had been completing his conquest of Spain, not without native revolt and a mutiny in his own army. In 205 B.C. he came back triumphant to Rome, to be elected consul and to press a bold plan for ending the war by transferring it to Africa. In high popularity with the masses, he was opposed by the senators and strongly by old Fabius, perhaps jealous of his junior's fame; but in the end he won leave to carry out his scheme, though not very liberally furnished for such an enterprise. In Sicily he gathered an army of 30,000 or 40,000 men that (204 B.C.) landed in the territory of Carthage, whose turn it now was to tremble for her own existence.

Scipio had already secured an ally here in the Numidian chief, Massinissa, whose rival, Scyphax, was kept loyal to Carthage by the hand of Sophonisba, heroine of Thomson's tragedy. There was no general rising in the invader's favour; and his first great success savours of what the Romans denounced as "Punic faith". By pretended negotiations for peace, throwing the enemy off their guard, he stealthily set fire to the separate camps of Scyphax and of Hasdrubal Gisco, the Carthaginian general, then in the confused surprise was made a great slaughter of men and beasts. This attack Scipio soon

followed up by a defeat in open field, capturing Scyphax and giving his kingdom to Massinissa.

When the conqueror appeared before Carthage, its people in despair sued for peace, offered by Scipio on humiliating terms. But during a truce, while the treaty was sent to be ratified at Rome, the war party in Carthage gathered head again. As a last hope, Hannibal was recalled from Italy, as also the wreck of his brother Mago's forces. The great general, long so ungratefully used by his countrymen, had still at his disposal a fleet and a force of 20,000 men or more. With what bitterness of heart we can imagine he left the scene of so many victories, returning to his native soil after an absence of a generation's life, nearly half of which he had spent in a powerful enemy's country. Few of his original comrades would be left; and the troops he brought to the relief of Carthage must have been mainly soldiers of fortune or Italian rebels against Rome.

His arrival turned the odds, for soon he had collected an army stronger than Scipio's, with eighty elephants. The Carthaginians now breaking the truce, the two armies clashed together in a plain to the south or west of Carthage. The generals are said to have had an interview, in which they vainly sought some ground of accommodation, each of them too well aware what a stake he was risking on the chance of war. "Never", exclaims Polybius, "were there seen more warlike nations, never more able generals, or better exercised in all the art and discipline of war; never was a greater prize proposed by fortune than that now set before the combatants. It was not Africa alone, nor Italy, that waited to reward the conquerors, but the entire dominion of the whole known world." The two sides, like Hamlet and Laertes, had in part changed weapons. Hannibal's army was largely made up of Italians, while the Numidian horsemen, who had helped to win his first battles, were now ranged against him under Massinissa. The battle of Zama (202 B.C.) was hotly fought, and for a time doubtful; but it ended in victory for the Romans. It looks as if the hastily gathered troops of Carthage were raw, or not very keen in the cause of a city that never cared to win the hearts of its servants. By now Roman soldiers had learned how to meet the dismaying elephants. At Zama the hero of so many battles on a foreign soil found his Waterloo.

When he fled back to Carthage with the remains of his routed army, there seemed nothing for it but submission. Hannibal himself, it is said, was foremost in urging peace, made on crushing terms. Carthage was reduced to be a tributary vassal of Rome: she kept her African territory, but must agree to make war only with the consent of her conqueror; stripped of her European colonies, she had to surrender all but ten battleships; and hostages were taken for the payment of a large indemnity. With such honour Scipio ended the great Punic War, coming back to Rome in triumph, hailed by the title of Africanus, added to the name of Hannibal's conqueror.[1]

[1] Every freeborn Roman had at least two names, like ourselves—the *nomen* of his *gens* or clan, to which was prefixed a personal *praenomen* bestowed on him soon after birth, as, for example, Sextus

Hannibal was still in the prime of life, and lived nearly twenty years longer; but the rest of his career is somewhat obscure. We can imagine what bitter thoughts of Rome he nursed, and how, like his father, he worked for revenge on their haughty foe. He appears to have come into power for a time at Carthage, reforming the state, and strengthening its crippled force, so as to attract suspicion at Rome. The Romans demanded his banishment, and the hostile Carthaginian faction was too ready to get rid of their hero; then he turned to Asia for a new field in which to face his hereditary enemies.

We have seen how Philip of Macedon's meddling in the Punic War had drawn the Romans into Greece. After the conquest of Carthage Rome more actively intervened in Greece, where the old disunion was rampant, and this later Philip tried for such a domination as had been won by his great predecessor. He was beaten in battle by the consul Flaminius, who, at the Isthmian Games, theatrically proclaimed the freedom of the Greek states, at last delivered from a native oppressor. Thus began what we should call a Roman "protectorate" of Greece, that ended, like most protectorates, in a practical annexation by gradual steps, and after bouts of resistance, among which the most notable event was the crushing of Perseus of Macedon at the battle of Pydna.

From Greece Rome was led on to attack Antiochus of Syria, an ambitious potentate who had backed the designs of Philip. The first Roman general to land in Asia was another of the Scipios, distinguished as Asiaticus when he had crushed Antiochus at the battle of Magnesia (190 B.C.). Hannibal now turns up again in the service of Antiochus, who had given him a naval command; but here he won no fresh laurels, nor could he persuade Antiochus to adopt a bold policy of again carrying war into Italy. His surrender being demanded as one of the terms of peace, he fled to the king of Bithynia, where also the hatred of Rome followed him; and so far-reaching proved its power that, when this king in turn was called on to give him up, Hannibal poisoned himself (about 182 B.C.) in despair of safer refuge.

Soon afterwards died his conqueror, Scipio Africanus, who also in his latter days had experienced ingratitude from his countrymen. Accused, rightly or wrongly, of peculation in office, he scorned to meet the charge by any less haughty defence than to recall the day when he humbled Hannibal and Carthage. The proceedings against him were dropped; but he retired into the country to die apparently an

Tarquinius. Noble families usually bore an added *cognomen*, derived from some personal peculiarity or title of distinction that might become hereditary. Thus, Marcus Tullius Cicero, christened *Marcus*, as we should say, belonged to the Tullian clan, and to a family of it which for some reason had taken a distinctive name believed to be connected with *cicer*, vetch or chick-pea, perhaps grown notably by an ancestor. There is sometimes a confusion between the nomen and the cognomen, Cicero being best known to our old writers as Tully. To those three normal names might be annexed an *agnomen*, a descriptive title won by exploits such as dubbed the Scipios *Africanus* and *Asiaticus*, or sometimes recalling the ancestral name of one that by adoption might take another, as in the case of a son of Lucius Aemilius Paulus, who, when adopted by a son of the great Scipio, bore his three names, with the addition of *Aemilianus*.' This worthy also earned glory in Africa, then had to be marked off from his great predecessor, so that his full name came to be nothing less than Publius Cornelius Scipio Aemilianus Africanus *Minor*.

embittered man, while his brother, Asiaticus, was condemned on a similar accusation. A few years before, it is stated by a Roman historian, Scipio Africanus, sent as envoy to Asia, met with Hannibal at Ephesus, and had a talk as to the greatest generals in history. The Carthaginian modestly ranked them in this order: Alexander, Pyrrhus, and Scipio himself. "What if you had overcome me?" asked Scipio humorously. "In that case," answered Hannibal, "I should have been greater than Alexander, Pyrrhus, and all." Students of war have inclined to confirm what was doubtless the great Carthaginian's real estimate; for there never was a general who, hampered by such difficulties, held himself for half a generation in the country of so powerful a foe. Between him and Napoleon, the greatest warrior of modern times, the following parallel is aptly drawn in Bosworth Smith's *Carthage*, where to the ancient hero is given the palm of moral qualities, shown in a patriotic devotion to his country that did not so much excite the admiration of Livy.

Each was the mainspring, the soul, the *vis viva* of the long struggle in which he was engaged. Each found himself pitted against the united strength and resolution of a great nation which, though it could produce no single general who was either like or second to him, yet, by the toughness of its fibre, and its inherent moral qualities, at last came off victorious. Each met his most formidable opponent for the first and last time in the great battle which was to end the war; and each, fighting under special disadvantages, was beaten by the general who was confessedly his inferior. What Scipio and Zama were to Hannibal, that Wellington and Waterloo were to Napoleon. Each won his first military laurels on a large scale in the plains of Northern Italy—Hannibal on the Ticinus and the Trebia, Napoleon on the Adda and the Mincio. Each won a victory over Nature as surprising as any of his victories over his foes: Hannibal by conquering the Little St. Bernard, Napoleon—not probably without a feeling of conscious and successful emulation—by conquering the Great. Each, in virtue of the most diverse and contradictory qualities, was capable of exercising enormous influence over men, and of arousing the passionate enthusiasm alike of the raw recruits and of the weather-beaten veterans who served under his standard. Each was a statesman as well as general. If Napoleon was able to "methodize anarchy" and to produce the Code Napoleon, Hannibal could, even in the hour of his defeat, in a year or two of office with very limited powers, reform the most inveterate abuses of the constitution and revivify the whole Carthaginian state.

The final fate of his unworthy motherland must be briefly told. For half a century Carthage was left alone, and began to recover some of her old commercial prosperity, while Rome, east and west, went on winning the haunts of barbarous tribes and the cities of rich kings, to be transformed into Roman provinces. But in time Rome grew jealous of that old enemy raising its head again. Of one sturdy Roman Conservative, Cato the Censor, veteran enough to remember the dread of Hannibal, it is recorded that at the end of his life he never spoke on any subject without dragging in his constant text *Delenda est Carthago* ("Carthage must be destroyed"). He is said to have given the senate

an object lesson in the shape of a bunch of fresh figs which he threw down with the exclamation: "Those were gathered but three days ago at Carthage: so near is the enemy to Rome!" And so, by always harping on the same subject, he has the repute of stirring his countrymen to his own implacable hatred of that enfeebled bugbear. The reviving wealth of Carthage was another inducement for Rome to pick a quarrel that began the Third Punic War in 149 B.C.

At first the Carthaginians were disposed for peace at any price; they even gave up their arms to appease those insatiate conquerors. But when they found Rome would be content with nothing less than the utter destruction of their city, they were roused to the courage of despair. The leader was another Hasdrubal, probably of Hannibal's family. The Roman legions were latterly led by Scipio Aemilianus, an adopted son of the Scipio family, who also earned the title of Africanus. The taking of Carthage is said to have cost two years' siege by land and sea, so resolute a defence was made by the inhabitants, the women cutting off their long hair to be spun into bowstrings. The final storm filled the streets for a week with such scenes of ruin and bloodshed that Scipio is described as moved to tears by the thought of how the same fate might one day fall upon Rome. The Byrsa, or citadel quarter, held out longest, but it then surrendered, pouring out 50,000 suppliant people to be sold as slaves, when the site of their burned homes had been ploughed up to destroy the very foundations of Carthage.

Thus that once mighty city was swept away from the earth (146 B.C.), not one stone of it being allowed to stand, according to picturesque history. Its territory became the Roman province of Africa, as capital of which was built a new Carthage, that later on grew to be a chief colony of its Roman masters, when they had mastered the known world. Again it fell in ruins, to call forth Tasso's famous lines:

> Great Carthage is laid low. Scarcely can eye
> Trace where she stood with all her mighty crowd:
> For cities die; kingdoms and nations die;
> A little sand and grass is all their shroud;
> Yet mortal man disdains mortality—
> Oh mind of ours, inordinate and proud!

## CHAPTER VI

# Julius Cæsar (100–44 B.C.)

Hannibal was the republic's last formidable invader from without; but for a long century Rome was still at war, often both at home and abroad. Those dazzling conquests had changed the rude and simple-minded Romans for the worse as well as for the better. The rich spoils of Syracuse, then of Greece and of Asia, brought among them a new sense for art and culture. Cato the Censor made himself noted as a rigid old Conservative who denounced the novel manners and tastes adopted by the Scipios and other aristocratic families; yet Cato himself, in his old age, learned Greek, which became the accomplishment marking an educated man, as Latin in modern Europe. Religion, morals, and social life underwent a change under mainly Hellenistic influences. It might well be said that conquered Greece led the mind of its conqueror captive.

The most obvious change was through the wealth gathered to Rome by the plunder or tribute of her rich vassals. As in the case of her earlier victories, the spoils of war were not well distributed. The gold and lands gained abroad fell into the hands of the few, while many Roman citizens were thrown out of work when accumulating estates could be cultivated by the labour of slaves, such as in hosts made part of a foreign war's booty. These human cattle often proved fit for more than manual work; they might be philosophers, authors, artists, whose services could be turned to account in teaching or amusing their masters. Plautus, the first famous Roman dramatist, copied Greek models; and his successor, Terence, came to Rome as a Carthaginian slave. His original name seems to have been Afer, "the African", to which he prefixed Publius Terentius, that of the master who emancipated him, as was the rule with those freedmen, growing to be a considerable class at Rome. Ennius, looked on as the father of Roman poetry, was a Greek by birth; but still earlier a slave from Magna Græcia, Livius Andronicus, appears to have written plays and poems. Fabius Pictor, whose works have perished, wrote the first Roman history in Greek. Painting, sculpture, architecture, and other arts came into Rome on Greek models. Exotic vices were introduced as well as embroideries on homespun life; while slavery did not fail to engender its curse for the character of masters who by fellow-men's sweat and stripes were enabled to live in slothful ease.

So the Romans grew more civilized, but also less virtuous. As

the rich became richer, the poor found themselves poorer. The thirst for gold which ancient poets harp on as accursed did its work in corruption of all classes. Judges could be bribed when senators were not ashamed to traffic with a public enemy. Generals thought as much of booty as of glory or patriotism; and, while they filled the coffers of the state with foreign wealth, took care to glean for themselves on conquests marked by stripped temples and plundered cities. The way to power was courting the favour of the populace by lavish display. *Ambire*, to go about canvassing for votes, took on the bad meaning that coloured our word *ambition*. Aspirants to the highest offices began by serving as ædiles, in which capacity they were expected to spend freely on the decoration of the city and the amusement of the citizens, thus often burdening themselves with a load of debt to be paid by the spoils of some vassal province, the government of which might reward such a political career. Even at the height of office new leases of popularity had to be bought. An effectual way of keeping one's name before the public was to delight it with costly shows and the cruel combats of the arena that at Rome took the place of free athletic contests in Greece. In the third century B.C. Rome learned to gloat upon the bloodshed of gladiators, first introduced at funerals, so their duels seem a survival of the custom of killing slaves on a great man's tomb. The conquest of foreign wildernesses whetted the taste for the spectacle of wild beasts set to tear each other or to fight with professional slaughterers. It was not indeed till the days of the empire that this brutalizing taste grew to its height, when hundreds, even thousands, of lions, tigers, bears, and other caged carnivores would be turned out at a single festival to die in the arena before the glistening eyes of a people no longer familiar with danger in their own persons.

Popularity and dignity were apt to be at odds, the champions of the people being sometimes aristocrats by birth, who had fallen out with their order, or honestly saw hope in a revolution. It must be remembered that while the annual magistrates were elected in turbulent popular assemblies, the Senate, as controlling the republic's foreign affairs, could do much to cripple an agitator's power by the apportionment of legions and provinces. There came a time when the votes of senators could be bought as well as those of mobs. The demoralization of Rome would be gradual, fitful efforts being made to arrest it, notably by the brothers Gracchi, grandsons of Scipio Africanus through that Cornelia who educated her boys so that she could boast of them as her jewels among the matrons now emancipated from a simplicity of personal adornment enforced upon them by early laws. The elder brother, Tiberius, pitying the misery of the masses, proposed to relieve it by reviving an old Agrarian law that forbade any citizen to hold more than 500 acres of the public land. As tribune of the people he got this law passed, and had been appointed one of three commissioners to carry it out, when, at the next election, he was killed by the threatened aristo-

cracy that, in fierce opposition to such a blow at their wealth, found excuse for violence in the popular candidate's zeal having transgressed constitutional custom by offering himself twice for the same office.

His law, however, remained in force for a time, till quietly set aside by the Senate when it regained authority over the popular party. The younger brother, Caius Gracchus, showing himself of the same spirit as Tiberius, was got rid of by being sent to serve abroad. But ten years after his brother's death he returned to stir the same questions on a larger scale. He also became a popular tribune, and was able not only to restore the Agrarian law, but to diminish the Senate's power by transferring the administration of justice to a jury chosen from the middle order of knights, while it was forbidden to put any citizen to death without a public trial, as the senators had done on pretence of the state being in danger. The aristocrats, cowed for a moment, found means to disarm Caius Gracchus by setting up another demagogue to outbid him for popularity; and when he had lost much of his influence his reforms were quenched in a massacre of his adherents, the tribune himself committing suicide as the only way to escape his murdered brother's fate. One of his measures had been a well-meant one that was to prove how bad economy may be paved with good intentions. He set up in Rome public granaries from which the poorer citizens could be supplied with cheap corn, a privilege that developed into distributions of food at the public expense, with which the aristocrats also, in their turn, came to bribe the populace. This helped to aggravate the burden of poverty, drawing landless countryfolk to the overgrown city to claim such benefactions and to pick up what might be going in the way of political bribery; so in time Rome became crowded with a mass of unemployed and unemployable.

Caius Gracchus fell, 122 B.C., when the Senate by that violent *coup d'état* again came to power, till checked by another popular leader, Caius Marius, a soldier of humble origin who married into the noble Cæsar family and became tribune of the plebs. About ten years after the death of the younger Gracchus, Rome went to war with the Numidian king, Jugurtha, who sought to fend off this danger by bribing the consul sent against him. But all Romans had not yet come so low as to trade in martial glory. The war was renewed with vicissitudes recorded in Sallust's well-known history; and the credit of ending it fell to Marius, who in 105 B.C. brought Jugurtha in chains to adorn his triumph at Rome. The success of this low-born general was looked on askance by the aristocracy, yet Marius showed no strong bent to figure as a democratic politician, concerning himself rather with reforms in the morals and discipline of the army. Before long he was called on for a greater service to his country that put it still deeper in his debt.

In Germany had gathered two hordes of northern warriors, the Teutons and the Cimbri, who swept over the Alps upon the Celtic Gauls now more or less thoroughly overawed by Rome. In the valley of the Rhone a large Roman army had been crushed by the weight of this onset, and for the moment it seemed as if Italy lay once more exposed to such devastation as three centuries before had nearly ruined Rome when the Gauls besieged its Capitol. But the new barbarian host turned aside into Spain, then back into Gaul, eating up the country like locusts in their devious wanderings; and it was not for two or three years that they advanced to overwhelm Italy in masses swollen by other tribes that had caught the restless fever of destruction. By this time Marius, appointed consul year after year, was ready with a strong and efficient army to meet a foe that had no great leader, could not force the Roman fortified camps, and did not even hold its double host together. Near Aix, Marius avenged the former defeat by what was rather an exterminating massacre of the Teutons than a battle (102 B.C.). Next year, on the Po, he also destroyed the horde of Cimbri, taking another line of invasion. After so signal victories he came back to Rome in such triumph that an ambitious man might have now made himself its master.

But Marius did not shine in civil politics; and when he had been a sixth time chosen consul, even his military renown began to be eclipsed by the younger Sulla, an aristocrat who had served under him with jealous heartburnings on both sides. Italy had already been troubled by slave insurrections, when early in the first century B.C. Rome had to face a demand from her Italian vassals, commonly styled *Socii* or "Allies", to be no longer treated as subjects but admitted to full rights of citizenship, as had already been done in the case of some favoured cities. The refusal of their demand led to a revolt known as the Social War, which for a moment united the stiff-necked Romans, their supremacy in danger from rebels who talked of nothing less than destroying Rome. Both Marius and Sulla took part in this war, which was not put down without a grudging concession of the franchise to all cities south of the Po. Rome's old enemies the Samnites held out most stubbornly, and Sulla had the glory of quelling them, after he had won popular favour by exhibiting a hundred lions at once to fight in the arena with African archers. Perhaps Marius was but half-hearted in resisting a claim which would appeal to his democratic sympathies; at all events he now began to fall into the background.

And now a new cloud arose on Rome's horizon, this time from the East. Mithridates, king of Pontus, had been trying to extend his dominions at the expense of neighbours supported by Rome; and the Social War seemed to open a course to his ambition. He burst into the Roman province of Asia, raising an insurrection in which tens of thousands of Italians, officials, traders, and settlers, were massacred in one day; then he crossed the Bosporus to excite the Greek states

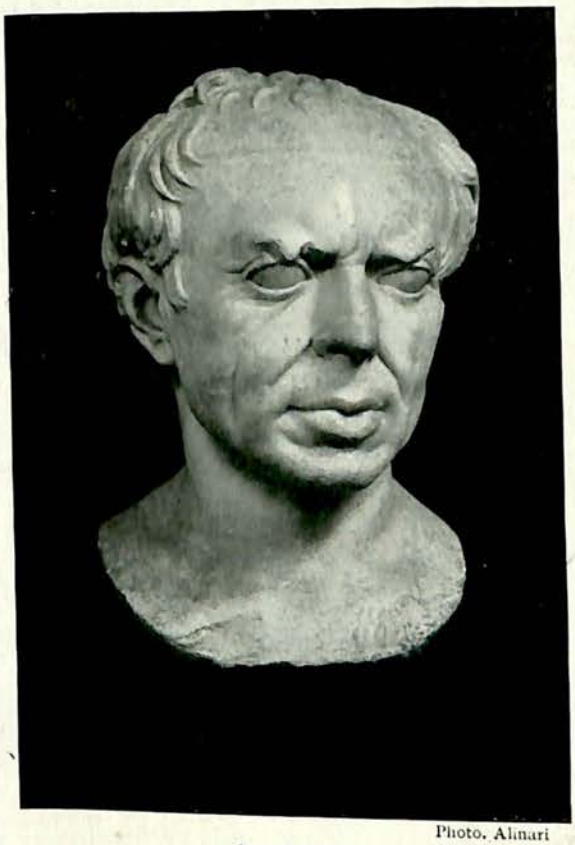


Photo. Alinari

MARIUS

*Vatican Museum, Rome*

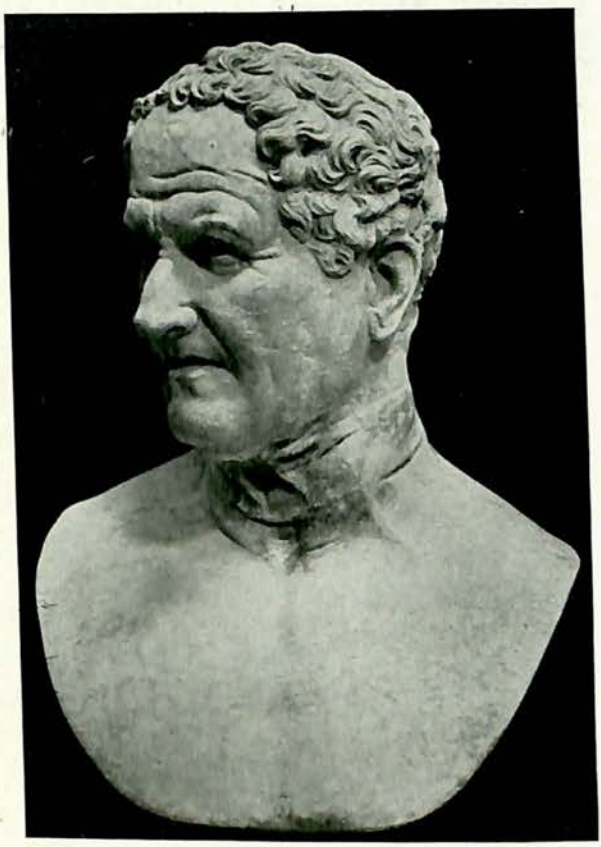


Photo. Alinari

SULLA

*Vatican Museum, Rome*

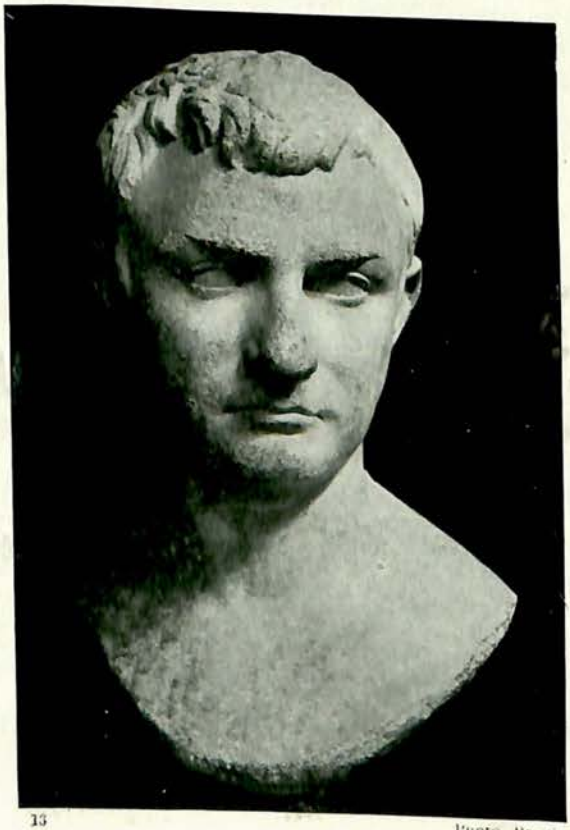




Photo. Brogi

POMPEY THE GREAT

*Naples Museum*

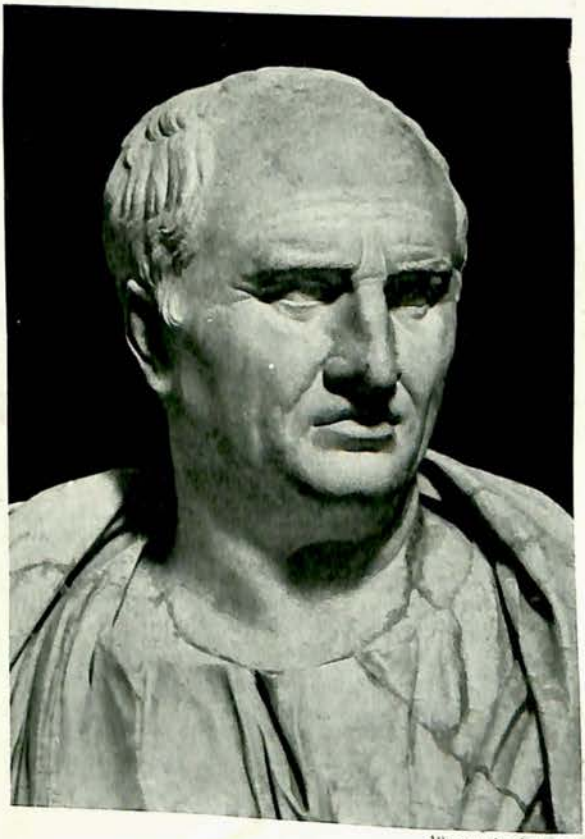


Photo. Anderson

CICERO

*Capitoline Museum, Rome*

to like revolt against their extortionate governors. No time should have been lost in opposing his progress, yet first it had to be settled by a bloody struggle whether Marius or Sulla should lead the army. A tumultuous election gave the command to Marius; but his rival, who had already seen service in Asia, was now at the head of an army ready to follow him anywhere. He marched upon Rome, broke into it with his troops, carried out a revolution marked by the usual scenes of bloodshed, and forced himself on the state as commander against Mithridates. Marius took to flight, seeking refuge in the marshes of Minturnæ, between Rome and Naples, where it is said that an assassin sent to make an end of him was scared by the tone in which the old general exclaimed: "Who dares kill Caius Marius?" He fell into the hands of the townsfolk of Minturnæ; and they got rid of this embarrassing captive by shipping him off to Carthage. Here also the Roman authorities hardly knew what to do with one whose sitting desolate among the ruins of Carthage makes one of the famous scenes in ancient history.

Sulla set out for Greece to win laurels by driving back the excursions of Mithridates. But he had reckoned too confidently on the effects of that reign of terror at Rome. One of the consuls he left behind him, Cinna, declared for the popular party. The next elections brought another scene of bloodshed. Cinna was driven from Rome, but soon raised an army of Italians, whose sympathies were against the proud Senate. When Marius returned from Africa to join Cinna, Rome surrendered to their forces; and they in turn carried out a ruthless massacre of their opponents. Assuming the consulship without any form of election, they seemed so firmly set in power that the aristocrats fled from the city. But old Marius soon died a natural death; and some time later Cinna was murdered by his own soldiers.

Meanwhile Sulla was earning fresh renown in Asia, where, after all, he had not been able completely to crush Mithridates when the interests of his beaten party called for his return to Rome. More than four years he remained absent, then came back with enormous spoils at the head of devoted legions flushed by victory. During that time his opponents had been in power; now he came as conqueror of his native country, joined by some of the banished aristocrats, and resisted most resolutely by the Samnites and other Italian allies. Fighting his way across Italy, once more stirred by civil war, he ended it by a battle at the gates of Rome that made him master of the city and the whole country (82 B.C.).

Named dictator by his partisans, a title unknown at Rome for more than a century, Sulla deliberately set about cowing the majority of the citizens by an orgy of revengeful slaughter. The prisoners taken in the battle were butchered by thousands in cold blood. The popular party he mowed down like thistles in reprisal for atrocities of which they had given too good example. Lists of outlawry were drawn up, a reward being offered for the head of everyone thus proscribed, and their property confiscated for division at the dictator's will.

The victims of this proscription were counted at nearly 5000, not a few coming into the list through private grudges or covetousness. Some, like the son of Marius, escaped murder by committing suicide. Never had Rome known such a sweeping revolution, though perhaps as many lives had been sacrificed in some of the former tumults. Having established his new reign of terror, Sulla ended it by proclaiming a code of laws and by putting the aristocratic Senate in full power; then he astonished the world by resigning his dictatorship and retiring into private life. Still more astonishing it seems that this monster of politic cruelty was allowed to die in peace at a country home, where he spent his last days in the enjoyment of dissolute pleasures and of the books and works of art he had robbed from Greece.

Out of such a welter of bloodshed were now rising the heads that would figure foremost in the next generation. The one destined to stand above all was Caius Julius Cæsar, born of the bluest Roman blood, for the Julian house claimed descent from Iulus, son of Æneas; yet he was also nephew of the democrat Marius, through whose influence he had entered political life early, being appointed a priest of Jupiter as a mere boy. This did not imply any religious vocation, for Cæsar seems to have been not free from the vices of his fellow aristocrats, while under a mask of pleasure-loving he hid the sternest temper. He is described as slender, fair, given to youthful dandyism, and constitutionally delicate, subject all his life to epilepsy, but by temperance and exercise able to steel his body to remarkable endurance. He was a scholar before becoming a soldier, who in youth wrote poetry, while the troubles of the time forced upon him pregnant studies in history and human nature. The date given to his birth, 100 B.C., makes him still in his teens at the time of Sulla's dictatorship, yet he was already a married man. Betrothed by his father to an heiress, he had jilted her to marry Cornelia, daughter of the consul Cinna, an alliance which tied him doubly to the popular party. Sulla ordering him to divorce this bride, Cæsar had the courage to refuse, then narrowly escaped perishing in the proscription. He saw well to hide himself for a time till his friends persuaded Sulla to pardon him, not over-willingly if we are to judge from a saying put into the sharp-eyed dictator's mouth, that in that boy he saw the making of many Mariuses. Cæsar, however, kept out of his way by joining the army in Asia, where he distinguished himself by personal gallantry.

After Sulla's death he came back to Rome, but did not join in a futile attempt made by some of his friends at a revolution against the now dominant Senate. He tried his powers as a pleader, without much success at first, so that he saw well to betake himself to Rhodes, to study at what was then a noted school of oratory. On the way, or on his former journey to Asia, he had an adventure, related by Plutarch so as to show a side of his character not much displayed in his own history of those troubled times.

He was taken, near the isle of Pharmacusa, by pirates, who were masters of that sea, and blocked up all the passages with a number of galleys and other vessels. They asked him only twenty talents for his ransom. He laughed at their demand, as the consequence of their not knowing him, and promised them fifty talents. To raise the money he dispatched his people to different cities, and in the meantime remained with only one friend and two attendants among these Cilicians, who considered murder as a trifle. Cæsar, however, held them in great contempt, and used to send, whenever he went to sleep, and order them to keep silence. Thus he lived among them thirty-eight days, as if they had been his guards, rather than his keepers. Perfectly fearless and secure, he joined in their diversions and took his exercises among them. He wrote poems and orations, and rehearsed them to these pirates; and when they expressed no admiration, he called them dunces and barbarians. Nay, he often threatened to crucify them. They were delighted with these freedoms, which they imputed to his frank and facetious vein. But as soon as the money was brought from Miletus, and he had recovered his liberty, he manned some vessels in the port of Miletus, in order to attack these corsairs. He found them still lying at anchor by the island, took most of them, together with the money, and imprisoned them at Pergamus. After which, he applied to Junius, who then commanded in Asia, because to him, as prætor, it belonged to punish them. Junius having an eye upon the money, which was a considerable sum, demurred about the matter; and Cæsar, perceiving his intention, returned to Pergamus, and crucified all the prisoners, as he had often threatened to do at Pharmacusa, when they took him to be in jest.

His studies at Rhodes were interrupted by a fresh outbreak of Mithridates, who again tried to raise Asia against its oppressors. Cæsar flew to the scene of action and did good service in checking this rebellion, repressed under Lucullus, one of Sulla's generals, who by his rapacity in plunder now gathered the enormous fortune that went to make his name a proverb for luxurious living.

When Cæsar came back to Rome he found another of Sulla's followers on his way to being master in turn. This was Cneius Pompeius, a brave and honest soldier, whose prowess had already earned him the title of Magnus. Pompey the Great at first let himself be the sword of the aristocratic party, and was sent to Spain to put down Sertorius, a partisan of Marius, who, taking refuge in Lusitania, the modern Portugal, had made himself independent there and in southern Spain, joined from Rome by members of the beaten party. It took some years to quell this insurgent province, Sertorius being at last assassinated. Meanwhile battles were being fought nearer home, through the breaking out of the worst of the "servile wars", in which slaves repeatedly sought to throw off their hard yoke. The gladiator Spartacus, with a band of his comrades, making the crater of Vesuvius his first stronghold, soon collected such an army of runaway slaves and other adventurers that for two years he was able to defeat all the troops sent against him. They ravaged the whole country till, 71 B.C., defeated by Crassus, whose renown had hitherto been as the richest citizen of Rome. Pompey came back from Spain

in time to share his credit in ending the revolt, when thousands of the unlucky slaves were crucified; then Pompey and Crassus took up power as consuls, though neither of them legally qualified.

Crassus was an unscrupulous and self-seeking man, but Pompey now broke with his aristocratic friends by showing an honest desire for the welfare of the people. With Cæsar among his adherents he restored the office of tribunes of the plebs and tried, without much success, to reform the administration of justice. Thus he became champion, in turn, of the democratic party, then before long was able to enhance his popularity by new services to the state. The Mediterranean had come to be infested by pirates who so preyed on commerce as to keep provisions dear at Rome. Pompey got himself put at the head of a great armament, with which he swept the sea and went on to root out the pirates from their headquarters in Cilicia, on the southern coast of Asia Minor. He was next appointed to succeed Lucullus in command against Mithridates, who finally fled into Scythia and killed himself in despair. The legend was that during his long and troubled life he had so saturated himself with antidotes that poison would not hurt him, and he had to make sure of death by steel. Pompey reduced Asia Minor to submission, conquered Syria, deposing the Antiochus dynasty and carrying the Roman Eagle as "abomination of desolation" into the temple at Jerusalem, that now came under the power of Rome.

These campaigns kept Pompey away for years, while Cæsar rose in Rome as a pleader, overshadowed by his companion in youth, Marcus Tullius Cicero, already eminent as the great orator of their day. Cicero was a well-meaning patriot, more conscientious and humane than most politicians of his day, but weak and timid, far less fit than Cæsar to steer his fortunes through troubled waters. Yet his vanity urged him to seek political power as well as the renown of learning and of the eloquence which he notably displayed in his prosecution of Verres for a tyrannous and corrupt governorship in Sicily. Cicero was now courting Pompey's party, but his irresolute temper made him a trimmer and presently a tool for the aristocratic Senate. With more patient firmness Cæsar pursued his secret ambition. Elected ædile, he sought popularity by displaying expensive shows which in his heart he despised, and he defied the aristocrats by restoring the statues and trophies of Marius as a sign of this party raising its head again. So successful was he in gaining votes that, not yet forty, he secured the dignified office of Chief Pontiff, one held for life. Such favour with the masses he could not maintain without borrowing large sums from usurers like Crassus, which he might never hope to repay unless by the future profits of a political career.

Many of the Roman nobles were as deep in debt as himself, and more discontented with their broken fortunes. Such a one was Sergius Catiline, a noted profligate, who had been one of Sulla's followers. Disappointed of his hopes of the consulship, he formed a plot to kill the consuls chosen for 65 B.C., and when this turned out a fiasco he

CICERO DENOUNCES CATILINE BEFORE THE SENATE. From the fresco by Professor Maccari in the Palace of the Senate, Rome.

This plate is reproduced from one of a series of frescoes from Roman history, executed by Professor Maccari in 1889, in the Palace of the Senate at Rome. It depicts Cicero's exposure of the Catiline conspiracy before the Senate in the first of his Catiline orations, B.C. 63.

Cesare Maccari, born in Siena in 1840, studied art there and in Florence, and has been for some time professor at the Academy of San Luca in Rome.

CICERO DENOUNCES CATILINE BEFORE THE SENATE

PROFESSOR MACCARI

went on enlisting conspirators among kindred spirits, apparently without any clear principle but a desire for "new things" that might fill their empty pockets. It is said that Cæsar dabbled in this conspiracy, but made up his mind to keep out of it. It was betrayed to Cicero, who now came into the consulship, disposed to be uncommonly well pleased with his own statesmanship. In eloquent words more natural to him than wise deeds, he denounced the designs of Catiline, raising such indignation in the Senate that the arch-plotter could not face so scathing an exposure, and hastily fled from the city. Some of his accomplices fell into the hands of the magistrates, when the Senate in its excitement gave the Consuls dictatorial power, and allowed those traitors to be privately executed, contrary to law. Cæsar opposed this hasty action, in which Cicero was supported by Porcius Cato, descendant of the famous Censor, a stern moralist and fanatical Conservative, who headed the party known as the Optimates, now including both the old nobility and such respectable *novi homines* as Cicero, drawn by interest and sympathy to side with the upper classes.

Cicero took it for his crown of glory that thus, as he boasted, he had saved the state by one of those deeds of rash violence often congenial to weak men. For the moment his severity seemed to be justified when Catiline appeared at the head of an insurrectionary force, soon put down and their leader killed. But there were whispers against the eloquent consul who had urged the execution of citizens without trial; and by and by the democratic party broke into a shout of accusation against Cicero, which swelled louder and louder, till he was fain to fly before it, taking refuge in Greece for a time. His most exasperated enemy was Clodius, or Claudius, another dissolute young nobleman whom he had called to account for an outrage on public morals in which Cæsar was concerned.

Clodius, slim and smooth-faced, showed himself a sort of classical Don Juan, who, at a religious festival of women held in Cæsar's house, had stolen upon the mysteries in female disguise, to be detected and shamefully driven out by the scandalized ladies. So great was the outrage that he had to stand his trial for sacrilege; and Cæsar now divorced Pompeia, his second wife, on the celebrated dictum that "Cæsar's wife must not even be suspected", yet strangely he does not seem to have quarrelled with Clodius. The profane masquerader, though clearly guilty, secured an acquittal by bribery, to the indignation of Cicero, whom Clodius never forgave for his part in the prosecution, and, presently, taking to patriotism as "the last refuge of a scoundrel", he exerted himself to stir the mob against Cicero, declaring that the eloquent Senator aimed at making himself king.

It was Cæsar who now apparently began to see his way to supreme power, while he knew that his day had not yet come. When he had served the office of prætor, the government of Spain fell to his lot, and he took himself out of the way for a year, quieting that disturbed province in proof of his military skill. Here Plutarch puts in his mouth the saying: "Better to be first in a mountain village than second

in Rome"; and Suetonius reports him as moved by a statue of Alexander the Great to sigh that he had done nothing as yet memorable when older than that conqueror of the world. His debts at this time are said to have amounted to a bewildering sum of sesterces,[1] amounting to £2,000,000, for which his creditors had at least the satisfaction of seeing him rise in office. He came back to Rome as a candidate for the consulship, which he secured 60 B.C.

Pompey, glorious from his conquests in the East, had also come back to stand for the moment the first man in Rome. It was half-hoped, half-feared that he would play the part of Sulla, but he showed no desire to be a tyrant. Dismissing his army, according to law, as soon as he landed in Italy, he contented himself with entering Rome in such triumph as had never been seen before, more than three hundred captive chiefs led in his magnificent train.

> And, when you saw his chariot but appear,
> Have you not made an universal shout
> That Tiber trembled underneath her banks?

But, whatever his abilities as a soldier, Pompey, like Marius, had no turn for crafty politics. He hardly knew which party to join, till the Senate's refusal to approve his deeds in Asia drove him into the arms of the democrats, having Cæsar now as their acknowledged leader. Cæsar, with the nonentity Bibulus as his colleague in the consulship, was more skilful at the game of intrigue. The rich Crassus, who had financed him in his office-seeking career, sympathized with the aristocrats, and bore ill will to Pompey. Somehow Cæsar managed to reconcile these two enemies, and the three made a secret bargain by which they were to share all power between them. This alliance, known as the First Triumvirate, was sealed by Pompey's marriage to Cæsar's daughter Julia.

The Triumvirs did not use their power ill. Besides a land act for settling Pompey's disbanded soldiers on farms, they carried against the opposition of the Senate a series of excellent laws known as the *Leges Juliæ*, aimed at reforming the corruptions of the state. It was less to Cæsar's credit that he got Clodius elected tribune of the plebs, and thus helped on the exile of Cicero, whose property was confiscated and his houses were given over to destruction. But Clodius proved a very questionable ally. Having gained his own ends, he quarrelled with Pompey, who was moved to agitate for Cicero's recall, and this banished orator came back after a year or so, greeted by the acclamations of the fickle populace.

Before this, Cæsar had withdrawn to a new scene of action. It may be he was disgusted with the constant tumults and intrigues of Rome. It seems likely that, foreseeing how, sooner or later, these dissensions

[1] The Roman *sestertius*, at this time equal to rather over 2*d.*, was 2½ *asses*, originally tenth parts of a *denarius*. In large sums it was usual to count by *sestertia* of 1000 *sesterces*, as in the case of the Portuguese *milreis*; but the signs for these figures were so little distinct that they have been often confused by some writers.

would have to be settled by the sword, he felt the need of winning a halo of military glory, like Pompey's, and the support of a devoted army. The Senate did what it could to shelve him, but he used his power over the populace to secure for himself a five-years' command in Gaul, where practically he might do what he pleased so long as victorious. So now he entered on that phase of his career which he has described so ably in his Commentaries, and henceforth stands before us in clearer light as the first man of his time. He was to be absent nine years, having taken up a task harder than he reckoned on. Froude, who, obsessed by reverence for "great men", takes a more sympathetically indulgent view of Cæsar's character and motives than do some historians, speaks thus of him at this phase of his career.

From the fermentation of Roman politics, the passions of the Forum and the Senate, the corrupt tribunals and the poisoned centre of the Empire, the story passes beyond the frontier of Italy. We no longer depend for our account of Cæsar on the caricatures of rival statesmen. He now becomes himself our guide. We see him in his actions and in the picture of his personal character which he has unconsciously drawn. Like all real great men, he rarely speaks of himself. He tells us little or nothing of his own feelings or his own purposes. Cicero never forgets his individuality. In every line that he wrote Cicero was attitudinizing for posterity, or reflecting on the effect of his conduct upon his interests or his reputation. Cæsar is lost in his work; his personality is scarcely more visible than Shakespeare's. He was now forty-three years old. His abstemious habits had left his health unshaken. He was in the fullest vigour of mind and body, and it was well for him that his strength had not been undermined. He was going on an expedition which would make extraordinary demands upon his energies. That he had not contemplated operations so extended as those that were forced upon him is evident from the nature of his preparations. His command in Further Gaul had been an afterthought, occasioned probably by news which had been received of movements in progress there during his consulship. Of the four legions which were allowed to him, one only was beyond the Alps; three were at Aquileia. It was late in life for him to begin the trade of a soldier; and as yet, with the exception of his early services in Asia, and a brief and limited campaign in Spain when proprætor, he had no military experience at all. His ambition hitherto had not pointed in that direction; nor is it likely that a person of so strong an understanding would have contemplated beforehand the deliberate undertaking of the gigantic war into which circumstances immediately forced him.

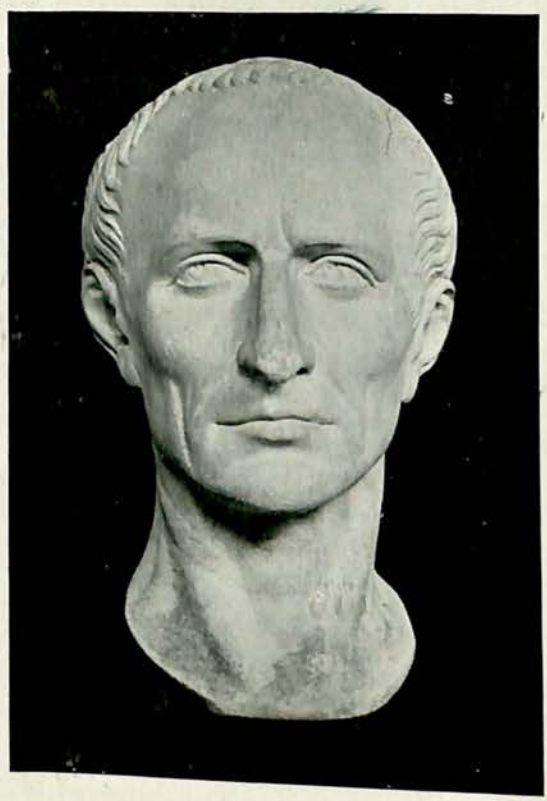
The Celtic tribes that for long had on the north hemmed in the growth of Rome, having now ceased to be a terror, were rather themselves threatened by the incursion of more vigorous barbarians from over the Rhine. Cisalpine Gaul, to the south of the Alps, had for two generations been settled and quieted as a Roman province, extending also some way up the Rhone, where its name survives as Provence. This was Cæsar's base of operations, to which from time to time he returned to organize his reinforcements and to take counsel with his backers at Rome. All Gaul beyond the Alps, as schoolboys know

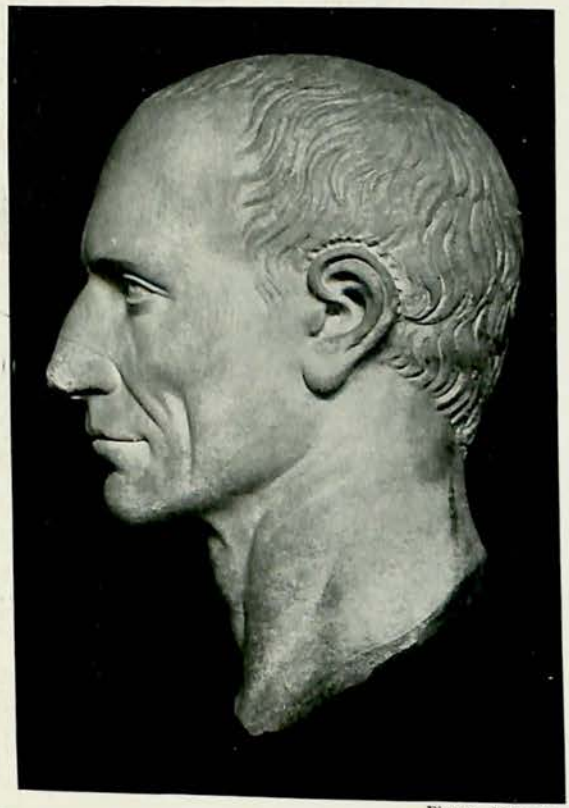
from the first line in his history, was divided into three parts. The tribes in the middle might be called a Roman protectorate, though these discordant bodies submitted to civilizing influence in different degrees, the central Ædui being the most obedient vassals, more recalcitrant their neighbours the Sequani of Burgundy and the Arverni who have left their name in Auvergne, while among all were smouldering embers of discontent. Towards the Pyrenees, the Aquitani, perhaps ancestors of the Basques, still kept their turbulent independence, as did the Belgæ north of the Seine, whom Cæsar took to be of German stock, and called the most sturdy of those barbarians, as farthest removed from the effeminating influence of contact with the Roman province. Their most warlike tribe, the Nervii, he notes with approval, would not let wine come among them to poison their manhood. Like the Red Indians of our own epoch, the Gaulish warriors were being demoralized by foreign arts and commerce, bringing in new wants and refinements that went to put them in dependence on Rome as surely as did its irresistible arms.

At this very time (58 B.C.) a mutiny was brewing among the Sequani, who, with the help of German invaders, had attacked the more loyal Ædui. Before he could deal with that danger, Cæsar had to check the Helvetii of the Swiss mountains, old foes of Marius, who again were swarming down upon the lowlands. Cæsar chased them from the Saône, and though badly seconded by his Æduan allies, on whom he depended for cavalry, he defeated them in a battle with tremendous slaughter, repeated so often in these campaigns that from first to last he must have killed more men than Napoleon, if his own figures are to be trusted. Women and children, too, came to be massacred or enslaved, for those barbarian hosts were moving tribes, sometimes hundreds of thousands strong, which the disciplined legions could cut down like corn once the warriors showed their backs in a disordered rout.

Cæsar next turned against the Germans under their chief Ariovistus, who professed to be an ally of Rome, and had secret messages from some of the Roman nobles that they would hold themselves in his debt for the death of their too victorious general. Summoned to a conference, the German chief tried treachery in vain, and was brought to an action under the Vosges or the Jura mountains, from which only scatterings of his army escaped across the Rhine. These signal defeats crushed all resistance in central Gaul, while scaring back another horde of Germans about to burst forth from the Rhine forests; so Cæsar's troops could lie quiet in winter quarters among the Sequani.

But the Belgæ were not overawed, rather stirred to arms by the sight of a Roman army advanced so far towards their fastnesses. Next spring, 57 B.C., Cæsar marched into the north of France, defeating a host of allied tribes, but himself nearly overwhelmed by a sudden onslaught of the Nervii, in whom he found foemen worthy of his steel. "That day he overcame the Nervii" he could look back on





Photos. Mansell

CAIUS JULIUS CAESAR

*Front and profile views of the bust in the British Museum*

Photo, Mansell

CLEOPATRA

*British Museum*

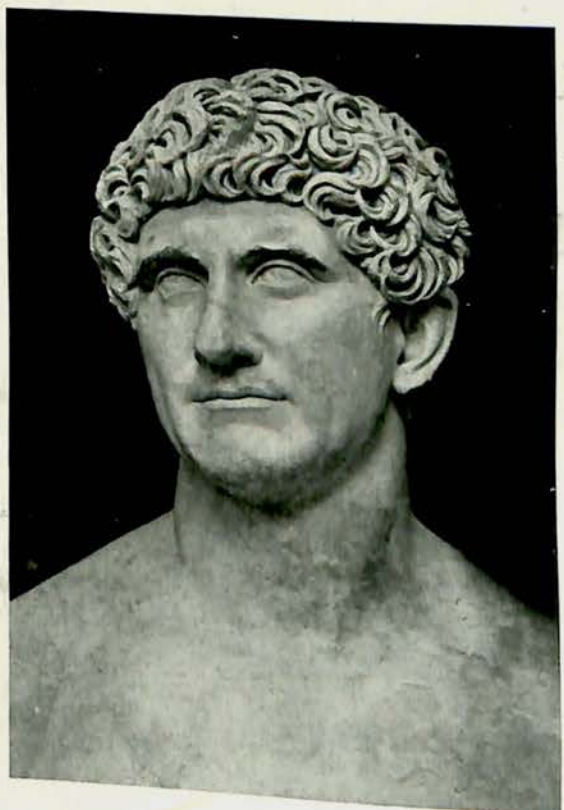


Photo. Anderson

MARK ANTONY

*Vatican Museum, Rome*

as the proudest of his life, for, taken unawares, by his personal gallantry he rallied the soldiers to repel a foe standing so firmly at bay that all but a few hundred were slaughtered. The last exploit of this campaign was the capture of Namur, occupied by an invading German tribe of whom more than 50,000 were sold into slavery, contractors following the army like jackals, with an eye to speculation in flesh and blood. One sometimes suspects Cæsar's figures as exaggerated: here, for instance, it seems hard to understand how those slave-drivers managed to guard so great a multitude of captives through a hostile country.

The news of such successes raised mingled feelings at Rome, where now the rival faction leaders went about with bodyguards of gladiators or slaves, always ready to come to blows with each other in the street. The masses rejoiced in Cæsar's victories, in which the Optimates had to feign satisfaction, though secretly alarmed at them as steps for his suspected ambition. Cicero, now recalled, was out of humour with his aristocratic friends, and thought well to cultivate Cæsar's friendship by a correspondence for which these two men of letters had many topics in common. Pompey, still the strongest man in Rome, presently began to resent the triumphs of a general who seemed to be eclipsing his own fame; but as yet he stuck to Cæsar, with whom he and Crassus had a conference at Lucca early in 56 B.C., when it was settled that Cæsar's command should be prolonged for five years more, though now the Senate would willingly have recalled him as too successful.

By this time Cæsar saw that the task in hand would take him longer than he had thought; or, like Alexander's, his appetite for conquering grew with its gratification. In 56 B.C. he completed the overrunning of Gaul by reaching the coast of Brittany, where he had hard work with the Veneti, here foremost in resistance. This tribe of hardy sailors lived on the islands or peninsulas of the coast, cut off from the shore as in so many fortresses from which they sallied forth in stout ships with high prows and sterns that proved very castles against the Roman missiles. Cæsar had a fleet of galleys built on the Loire, and hit on the device of arming their crews with scythes pushed out to cut the tackle of the skins used as sails by the Veneti, so that their heavy craft were left unmanageable and could be taken by boarding. In the same year, one of his lieutenants defeated the Aquitani in the south; then the whole country seemed to be subdued.

In 55 B.C. Gaul was threatened by another invasion of migrant Germans, pressed forward by intruders upon their own forest home. The Belgæ inviting them over the Rhine, an enormous host gathered in the flats of the Netherlands, where they sought Cæsar's permission to settle, when he came to meet them there. Negotiations were broken off by a chance fray, that gave him excuse for a slaughter the victims of which he counts by hundreds of thousands. To drive the lesson home he crossed the Rhine on a bridge built at Bonn, making a

demonstration in the country of the Germans, who fled before him or sent to beg peace, apparently as much impressed by such a wonder as a bridge as by the army it brought among them.

In the autumn of that year Cæsar made his first acquaintance with Britain, whose white cliffs, seen across the Straits of Dover, had excited his curiosity. It was a mere reconnoitring expedition which he carried out with two legions embarked in a flotilla of galleys. On a fine evening he set sail, and next morning came off the South Foreland, its heights crowned with grim warriors, who followed the fleet as it stood northward and hotly opposed the landing, that apparently was made about Deal. So here we have the first historic glimpse of our ancestors, as seen through Cæsar's eyes, who, it must be noted, records his exploits in the third person.

When the barbarians perceived our intention, sending on ahead the horsemen and chariots that are the strength of their force, with the rest they followed us along the coast to oppose a landing. This was a very difficult business, for the ships were too big to come to shore unless in deep water, while the soldiers, on unknown ground, their hands full, weighed down by their equipment, had at the same time to jump overboard, to get a footing among the waves, and to fight the foemen, who from the beach, or running out a little way into the water, with their limbs quite unimpeded, at home on the ground, boldly hurled their darts and urged on their well-trained horses. So our men, daunted, and not at all practised in this kind of fighting, did not show such smartness and resolution as in battles on land.

Seeing this, Cæsar ordered the long ships, a kind less known to the barbarians and more easily handled, to separate themselves from the transports and by hard rowing to be laid on the enemy's flank, where by slings, arrows, and engines they might assail and drive him away. And indeed this manœuvre was effectual, for the barbarians, scared by the look of these ships and their rowing, and the novel artillery, came to a stand, and even retired a little. Then as our soldiers hung back, chiefly on account of the deep water, the standard-bearer of the tenth legion, after a prayer to the gods that what he did might turn out well, sprang into the sea and began to bear the eagle towards the enemy, crying: "Down with you, comrades, unless you wish the eagle to be taken: I, for one, will do my duty to the republic and the general!" And his comrades, calling on each other not to suffer such a disgrace, leaped overboard in a body, at the sight of which, the soldiers in the nearest ships did alike, and made towards the enemy.

The fight was fierce on both sides. Our men, however, were in great confusion, as neither able to keep their ranks, nor stand steady, nor stick to their standards, rallying from one ship and another in any company they could join; whereas the enemy, being familiar with these shallows, when they saw a few men straggling forward from the ships, spurred on their horses to attack them in difficulties, often surrounding small groups, while others on their flank hurled darts among the larger bodies. Thereupon, Cæsar ordered the ships' boats to be manned, as well as the scouting craft, and sent them to help any party he saw in need The

soldiers, as soon as they drew up on the beach, with the rest coming on behind them, charged the enemy and put them to flight, but could not pursue them far, because the cavalry had failed to keep up and reach the island. In this one point Cæsar had not his customary good fortune.—*De Bello Gallico*, IV, 24–26.

The Britons were so much impressed that they sent envoys to beg for peace, though soon it appeared that they were preparing war on a larger scale. A storm sprang up, driving back the ships that carried the cavalry. The whole fleet was much knocked about by bad weather, the vessels hauled up on the shore being swept away by a spring tide, that came three days after the landing to astonish the Romans, unacquainted in their own seas with such a phenomenon. The enemy, reinforced from far and near, attacked a detachment sent out to forage, but Cæsar came to its aid, and got safe back to his camp, where for days he was kept busy in repairing the shattered ships with the materials of those hopelessly wrecked. Meanwhile the stormy winds continued to blow that once and again have guarded our native isle. In one more combat the British chariots were again routed. But the drenched army was out of heart; and, as now the equinoctial gales might be expected, Cæsar thought well to be off, taking the chance of a lull in the weather. By a night voyage he made the mainland, there to quarter his troops for the winter, while he himself hurried over the Alps to quiet a disturbance in Illyria, that made part of his huge province.

Next year, 54 B.C., he returned for a second invasion of our island, the episode of his campaigns naturally of most interest to us, and even at the time most famous, though it led to no great result. Britain then loomed as mysterious as did America on the horizon of Ferdinand and Isabella's generation, magnified to Roman eyes by the little that was known of it. Through the winter, Cæsar had information collected about the island, while ships and men were gathered on the opposite shore to the number of five legions and hundreds of vessels, three legions being left behind to hold Gaul safe. His rendezvous, like Napoleon's, was somewhere about Boulogne. Delayed by westerly winds, and by disloyalty on the part of the chief Dumnorix, a leader of the Ædui on whom he depended for cavalry, it was not till after midsummer that he could cross the strait to land again, as seems most probable, near Deal, or where the Stour mouth is now choked up by the flats of Sandwich, on which the descendants of many invaders play golf together. This time the natives did not venture to oppose his landing, scared away, he supposes, by the sight of his huge armament. He disembarked and encamped; then, having heard of a large force assembled near him, lost no time in seeking it out by a night march. The Britons were found near Canterbury in a forest camp fortified after their own manner with trees felled across its entrances. Out of this the

Roman soldiers pushed them by a steady onset, but the day was so far spent that little could be safely done in the way of pursuit till next morning. Then Cæsar got news of a storm suddenly sprung up working havoc among his ships. He hurried back, to find forty vessels lost and many others much damaged. It seemed well to haul up all that were left and secure them within an entrenchment, while artificers went to work on repairs, and new ships were ordered to be built on the mainland.

The work of repair, carried out night and day, took some ten days, after which Cæsar marched again up the Stour to encounter the British forces, now much swollen in numbers, and under command of Cassivellaunus, a powerful chief from north of the Thames. The British tribes were apt to be at feud, but such an emergency could rally them together for a time; and in a broken country, often thickly wooded, they now made a running fight of it for two days, with sudden dashes that sometimes discomposed the heavy cohorts, and cunning feints at retreat by which squadrons of Roman cavalry might let themselves be led into a trap, where suddenly painted warriors leaped from their flying chariots to close upon the assailants cut off from support. But after one hot charge this swarm of warriors suddenly dispersed, leaving clear Cæsar's passage to the Thames.

Where he crossed this river has been matter of much controversy, ranging from a ford as low as Westminster to one as high as Walton, while Brentford, by an inscription, puts in a confident claim to the honour. On Wimbledon Common and on St. George's Hill behind Weybridge, as on other spots, there are camps that bear Cæsar's name; and in either of these he may have rested before making the passage. He says himself that there was only one ford, fortified by stakes in the bed of the stream as well as fencing the bank, and that his men crossed up to the shoulders in water. When he pushed forward, Cassivellaunus still dogged him with some thousands of the charioteers who called forth Cæsar's soldierly admiration, so swiftly and deftly did they drive their clattering machines of war, and so nimbly could they spring along the pole or balance themselves on the yoke to aim their darts at a broken foe. But the chief did not now venture a battle, and the Romans drove him back to his stronghold, probably that christened St. Albans, which has more than one title to be our oldest city. An important neighbouring tribe, the Trinobantes, offered their submission, while other tribes showed no alacrity in obeying the summons to war sent out by Cassivellaunus, who presently was ready to treat with Cæsar. He, for his part, wanted to be back in Gaul before winter set in, so he granted peace on terms of receiving hostages and the Britons agreeing to pay tribute to Rome.

Marching back to Deal, he again took a chance of fine weather to re-embark. This time he had been about two months in Britain, keeping his eyes open and taking notes that show him fairly well informed. He heard of Ireland and of the Isle of Man. He observed our insular

climate, that would not suit the sons of Italy. The country seemed well populated, stocked with cattle, and not without commerce; iron bars were used as money, but also gold coins. Most of it, indeed, was so poor that, as Plutarch remarks, the Britons lost more than Cæsar gained by this invasion. He understood the skin-clad inland tribes to be aborigines, while those of Kent, immigrants from Gaul, had brought over some of its nascent civilization, cultivating grain as well as rearing cattle. Perhaps the chiefs and their courts had some veneer of manners at secondhand from the mainland, while the mass of the people were rude barbarians like the subjects of certain African potentates to-day. Nearly all the Britons Cæsar saw agreed as to features that have stuck fastest in our notions of them, long hair, fierce moustaches, and skins stained blue with woad, by way of making themselves horrific in battle. One point he noted to good purpose, the skin-clad coracles which he afterwards copied to help him over a flooded river in Spain.

Not till the next century would Roman soldiers return to face those fierce islanders. Cæsar's visits were mere theatrical display; and he had his hands full in Gaul. His other campaigns here must be briefly passed over. The Gauls were by no means subdued, and next year brought him hard work in cutting off the hydra heads of their disaffection. Also he made another short raid across the Rhine, so far taming the Germans that presently some of their horsemen are found serving him against the Gauls. Hitherto he had been able to deal with the tribes separately, but in the winter of 52 B.C. a general rebellion broke out under Vercingetorix, a brave young chief of the Arverni, joined even by the Ædui who had been till now professed allies of Rome. In anticipation of this rising Cæsar had got fresh levies from Italy, and he could divide his army into two parts, one under his lieutenant Labienus scattering the enemy on the Seine, while with the other he himself drove Vercingetorix into his stronghold at Alesia in what was to be Burgundy. Here, while Cæsar besieged a host more numerous than his own, in his far extended lines he was himself attacked by 200,000 or 300,000 Gauls, coming to the aid of their champion, but these myriads were routed with great slaughter. Repulsed in his attempts to sally from the fortress, Vercingetorix, for want of provisions, had to surrender, and was later on put to death after being led captive to Rome, a hero who deserved a better fate. At news of this triumph Rome went wild for joy, where the grudging Senate was fain to decree a public thanksgiving for twenty days, which proved not long enough for the popular enthusiasm. Not that it need have been all honest enthusiasm, for the treasures Cæsar amassed in Gaul were freely spent to keep up his influence at home during so long absence.

His eighth year of campaigning (51 B.C.) was spent in trampling out the smouldering fires of insurrection. Having overawed the Gauls by stern examples, in their submission he treated them with a mildness and generosity that won their hearts after all; and the province was

at last pacified under the Roman yoke, when in nine years' warfare, exclaims Plutarch, Cæsar had taken "800 cities by assault, conquered 300 nations, and fought pitched battles at different times with 3,000,000 of men, 1,000,000 of which he cut in pieces and made another million prisoners". Now he was free to turn upon his secret enemies in Rome.

There in his absence Pompey and Crassus had shared the chief authority and for a time backed Cæsar in all the intrigues against him. But Pompey grew more and more jealous of his fame, while the rich Crassus, too, was fired with martial ambition. The latter got himself appointed to the province of Syria, and led an army into the deserts of Mesopotamia to quell the warlike Parthians now rampant on that edge of the Roman empire. But again Rome might see the folly of a system that gave military command to a mere politician. Crassus, slack in discipline and ignorant of strategy, was defeated and killed with 20,000 of his men (53 B.C.). Next year the demagogue Clodius was murdered in a fray with his rival Milo. The Roman mob, stirred to fury by the death of their unworthy favourite, burned the Senate house, and the alarmed Senators made Pompey practically dictator, under the title of sole consul, as the only way of restoring order. There was even a talk of crowning him king.

Pompey now began to veer towards the aristocratic party, his alliance with Cæsar loosening after the death of his wife Julia, Cæsar's daughter, when he married into the noble family of Scipio. Their bargain had been that Cæsar should come back to be consul, at the end of his ten years term in Gaul. Now Pompey was for backing out of this agreement; and the Senate proposed to cut short Cæsar's command by a year, so that he might come to Rome to seek the consulship as a private person, who could more easily be dealt with than a general with an army behind him. Cæsar had friends and partisans through whom he was kept informed of these designs. In 50 B.C. he brought one of his legions to Ravenna, on the border of his Cisalpine province, and thence entered into negotiations with the hostile faction, offering to give up his command if Pompey would do the same. The Senate ordered him to disband his army. Cæsar answered by crossing the boundary river, Rubicon (49 B.C.), where tradition puts into his mouth: "The die is cast!" He thus declared war against the republic, since no provincial general might lead his troops into Italy proper.

All disguise being thus thrown off, Pompey stood forth as champion of the Senate. He had boasted that he need only stamp with his foot and legions would arise from the soil; but now soldiers did not come so readily at his call, or proved half-hearted in the service of one whose popularity was worn out. Cæsar's well-tried troops, on the other hand, followed him eagerly; and he was soon joined by adherents from all quarters. His march through Italy was like a long triumph. Half the Senators fled from Rome in alarm. Cicero and others joined Pompey, whose most important recruit was Labienus, Cæsar's trusty lieutenant in Gaul; but most of the desertions were from the other

side, while cautious souls hardly knew which side to take. Pompey fell back to Brundusium, the Dover of the Roman world, and embarked for Greece, not venturing to face his rival on Italian soil. Without serious opposition Cæsar entered Rome, where he seized the public treasure and the reins of government. It seemed no time for shows of triumph: later on, when almost all his foes were under his feet, he celebrated a long list of victories by four triumphal processions at once.

His party was now so strong at Rome that he could presently set forth to crush the opposition in the provinces. Sending expeditions to secure the islands of Sicily and Sardinia, Cæsar himself marched by Marseilles into Spain, Pompey's own province, where his lieutenants held out, but were reduced to submission in little more than a month. Then the ever-victorious general returned to Rome as Dictator, a dignity he soon laid down, his real power being as Imperator, a military title that now comes forward in Roman affairs.

From Brundusium he next crossed the Adriatic to attack Pompey, who meanwhile had gathered a large army at Dyrrachium, which was the Grecian Calais. Cæsar, ill off for ships, could bring over only part of his forces at once, and some of the transports being captured by the enemy's fleet, the rest of his army was long delayed at Brundusium. It was now that, in his eagerness to hurry them on, he is said to have recrossed the Adriatic in a small vessel, when, a storm frightening the pilot, his passenger loftily assured him: "You carry Cæsar and his fortunes!" This, indeed, seems a doubtful legend not mentioned in Cæsar's own story. Pompey's chief strength was in ships, which he could use with effect to cut off Italy's supply of food; but it seems strange that in these wars naval power played no greater part, when armies are repeatedly found crossing the sea in face of a hostile fleet, propelled by oars as well as sails.

Even after Cæsar had all his troops landed in Greece, they were but half the number of Pompey's, who lost a chance in not pouncing on them while still divided. But the larger army was mostly raw levies with whom their experienced general would be in no haste to face Cæsar's veterans; and though the first encounter went in Pompey's favour, he hung back from a decisive battle, till both armies had shifted their ground into Thessaly. There, on the plain of Pharsalia (48 B.C.), Pompey, though still two to one in numbers, was overwhelmingly defeated. The beaten leader fled to Egypt, to be basely assassinated by order of its government, unwilling to have such an inconvenient refugee on their hands.

That victory put the seal to Cæsar's domination. At Rome he was nominated Dictator for a year, Consul for five years, and Tribune of the people for life. He went on to Egypt, where with characteristic generosity he scorned the gift of Pompey's head, and had his assassins put to death. Here he stayed to end a civil war by setting on the throne the last prince of the Ptolemies jointly with his sister Cleopatra, according to their father's will. The conqueror now fell under the charms of this famous queen, that must have cast a spell on his pru-

dence, when with a small force he held himself against a perilous rising in Alexandria; and even after receiving reinforcements he was delayed for months by a war that seems of little concern for his fortunes. By Cleopatra he had a son named Cæsarion; and later on she followed him to Rome.

But first, in the spring of 47 B.C., he was called for in Asia, where the Armenian King Pharnaces, son of Mithridates, had raised his head against the Romans. It was then Cæsar sent home that famously concise dispatch: *Veni, Vidi, Vici* (I came, I saw, I conquered). By autumn he was back in Rome, but before the end of the year set out for Africa to put down the last forces of the aristocratic faction, under Cato and Scipio, Pompey's father-in-law. They in turn were beaten; and Cato committed suicide in Utica, rather than see the republic overthrown by a conqueror whom he hated as his ancestor had hated Carthage. His memory, embalmed by Cicero's eloquence, came to be cherished as that of the last Roman patriot, though to Cicero's laudation Cæsar wrote a counterblast under the title of *Anti Cato.* No doubt there was a good deal to be said on both sides; yet rather futile seems Cato's fanatical zeal for a constitution which every now and then could be upset by cruel tyranny.

Cæsar, for his part, had no mind to play the tyrant after the pattern of Marius and Sulla. When opponents looked for nothing at his hands but proscription and massacre, he surprised them by proclaiming a general amnesty and using his authority to stanch the wounds of civil war. In the course of it a correspondence of these enemies had fallen into his hands, which he magnanimously burned unread. So considerate was he of Roman feelings that his triumph for the last campaign was held, not over Scipio and Cato, but nominally for the fall of the African king Juba, their ally. So generous was he to the fallen, that he had Sulla's and Pompey's statues set up again in honour; and while he richly rewarded his followers with money, lands, and magistracies, he not only pardoned but put in office some of the hostile partisans. He spent his own wealth and the public treasure, now at his disposal, in sumptuous benefactions to the people of Rome. He used his power to have passed laws for correcting the evils of the time, especially the luxury and extravagance that corrupted Roman spirit; in his private life he set an example of moderation, even simplicity. Already he had interfered to relieve the burden of debt hung by usurers round the neck of many citizens, when bad security naturally bred a high rate of interest; yet he would not, as might be expected from a mere demagogue, wipe out all accounts as between debtor and creditor. Though his own conduct had not always been beyond reproach, he now showed himself a severe judge of morals in a censorship to which he was specially appointed; and he did what he could to purify the corrupt courts of justice. He changed the aristocratic constitution of the Senate, enlarging it and admitting freedmen as well as enfranchised Italians, so as to put the Roman state on a broader basis.

THE ROMAN EMPIRE
AT THE DEATH OF JULIUS CAESAR, B.C. 44
Boundary of the Empire at the end of the Mithridatic Wars, B.C. 64
Additions between 64 and the death of Caesar
Tributary and Protected States
Roman Miles
English Miles
OCEANUS ATLANTICUS
OCEANUS GERMANICUS
Mare Suevicum
SARMATIA EUROPEA
SARMATIA ASIATICA
M. Caspium
BRITANNIA
HIBERNIA
CALEDONIA
GERMANIA
GALLIA
Oceanus Gallicus
Oceanus Cantabricus
Aquitania
Belgica
Lugdunensis
Narbonensis
VINDELICIA
RHAETIA
NORICUM
PANNONIA
DACIA
ILLYRICUM
Dalmatia
MOESIA
PONTUS EUXINUS
Colchis
Iberia
Albania
Mare Caucasus Mons
ARMENIA
Armenia Minor
Armenia Major
MEDIA
Atropatene
REGNUM PARTHORUM
MESOPOTAMIA
BABYLONIA
HISPANIA
Tarraconensis
Baetica
Lusitania
Baleares Is.
Corsica
Sardinia
ITALIA
Etruria
Latium
Campania
Apulia
Lucania
Bruttium
Sicilia
MEDITERRANEUM MARE
Creta
THRACIA
MACEDONIA
Epirus
Achaia
BITHYNIA
PONTUS
Mysia
ASIA
Lydia
Caria
Lycia
Pamphylia
CAPPADOCIA
CILICIA
Lycaonia
Galatia
Pisidia
SYRIA
Phoenicia
Judaea
Syria Deserta
ARABIA
Arabia Petraea
Arabia Deserta
Arabia Felix
AFRICA
Mauretania Tingitana
Mauretania Caesariensis
NUMIDIA
Africa Propria
Syrtis Minor
Syrtis Major
CYRENAICA
Libya Deserta
Atlas M.
Tropic of Cancer
John Bartholomew & Co. Edinr.

Among his institutions the one most interesting to us is the reform of the Calendar which, as Pontifex Maximus, he now had carried out by help of a Greek astronomer. The Romans had calculated by lunar months, brought to square roughly with the course of the sun by an intercalated month now and then; but this matter being in the hands of the aristocratic college of pontiffs, they had made a mystery of the Fasti or sacred dates, deceiving the populace about them to fit the ends of political intrigue. Between ignorance and corruption the reckoning of time had now fallen so much behind that the winter solstice came in October. Cæsar put this right by boldly inserting three months in the current year, henceforth to be measured by the sun, which, according to Alexandrian astronomers, fulfilled its course in 365 days and 6 hours. The extra quarter of a day was taken in by the device of leap years, familiar to us. But whereas that Alexandrian calculation was nearly twelve minutes too long in the course of a century and a quarter or so, the civilized world got a day ahead of the sun, till in the sixteenth century Pope Gregory amended this by striking out ten days and providing that three leap years should be dropped in four centuries. The Gregorian Calendar, now used all over Europe, except in the domain of the Greek Church, and there now likely to come into use, was more readily adopted by Catholic countries; but in England suspicion of a Pope's handiwork availed to reject it till 1752, by which time eleven days had to be left out of the Julian Calendar, as was enacted not without noisy opposition from John Bulls wrongheaded enough to fancy that they were being robbed of so many days of their life.

The ancient Roman month was divided not into weeks but into decades, reintroduced for a time by fanatical classicists of the French Revolution. We have Teuton godfathers for our days of the week, while our months bear Roman names. The month of Mars beginning the year, its fifth month was renamed *Julius* in honour of Cæsar; as afterwards his successor had the sixth dubbed *Augustus*; indeed the vanity of other emperors ordained similar changes which did not permanently supplant the original numbering that made our last month the tenth of the Roman year.

The Julian Calendar dates from 46 B.C. Next year Cæsar had another war to wage, and that was his last. The sons of Pompey had raised an insurrection in Spain, which again he invaded to crush them in a hard-won victory. On his return the servile Senate loaded him with fresh honours and oaths of allegiance. He was made Imperator and Dictator for life, entitled Liberator and "father of his country", and even raised to a place among the gods. His statue was placed in the temples and his image on the coinage. His person was pronounced sacred, a guard of nobles and knights being appointed to protect him.

He was now a king in all but the name, one still hateful at Rome. It appears that he had the weakness of coveting this title, if it be true that he got Mark Antony, the devoted partisan made his nominal

colleague in the consulship, publicly to offer him a crown, calling forth, however, such clear marks of disapprobation that he saw best to refuse it. It is said that he affected wearing a laurel wreath to conceal his baldness. Another rift in his satisfaction was the want of an heir. Though now married again to Calpurnia, daughter of a prominent politician, he had no legitimate son, and was fain to adopt his grand-nephew Octavius, after a custom frequent among the Romans.

Cæsar spent the last year of his life in vast plans for the glory and the welfare of his wide dominion. He proposed to codify the laws, to foster learning, to drain such marshes as still canker great stretches of Italian soil, to pierce the isthmus of Corinth with a canal, while he improved Rome's harbour at the silting mouth of the Tiber. He arranged to settle colonies of disbanded soldiers and poverty-stricken citizens at Carthage, Corinth, and elsewhere. He was preparing next year to set out against the barbarous tribes of the Danube and the more distant Parthians who still defied the might of Rome. But that year was to cut short his life at the age of fifty-six.

Early in 44 B.C. a conspiracy to assassinate him found leaders in the "lean and hungry" Cassius, animated by some private grudge, and his brother-in-law, Junius Brutus, who, with a dubious claim to descent from the expeller of the Tarquins, had fought against Cæsar under Pompey, but was pardoned and taken into special favour, for which he proved so ungrateful. His brother, Decimus Brutus, another of the plotters, had been treated by Cæsar like his own son, as scandal made him out to be. The incidents of the tragedy are familiar to us as copied by Shakespeare from Plutarch. It is clear that the conspirators were numerous and could count on a good deal of secret sympathy among the aristocrats who stooped to flatter Cæsar. It is said that he was warned of his danger, but scorned all caution. He would not avail himself of the bodyguard appointed to protect his person; and, if it be true, what was told afterwards, that appalling phenomena of nature presaged his death, he saw them in the spirit of Achilles—"Portents and prodigies are lost on me!" On the fatal Ides of March (the 15th of the month) he went to the Senate house, where the Senators obsequiously rose to greet him. The conspirators pressing round with a petition which he haughtily rejected, one twitched away his gown to give the first stab, then the rest closed upon him so excitedly that they are said to have wounded one another in reaching their mark with more than a score of swords. When Cæsar saw his friend Brutus about to strike, with the dying reproach *Et tu Brute!*—"Even thou, Brutus"—he drew his toga round his head and sank in his blood at the foot of Pompey's statue. That enemy seemed now avenged by a deed beheld in wonder, horror, or approval; but there is no word of interference with the assassins. They had taken care to withdraw from his side the faithful henchman, Mark Antony; and not one of all his obsequious flatterers struck a blow to protect him.

So died the greatest man of Rome, one of the greatest in history if we consider how he was distinguished as author, orator, scholar,

statesman, legislator, man of science, as well as by the renowned soldiership of which he gave clear proof only towards the end of his life. The blemishes on his character chiefly belonged to his age and class, and to such a turmoil of disorder as made his ambition not unworthy. All his own were the great-mindedness and generosity that should have shamed the mean minds of Rome, but seem to have won rather the hearts of the open foes whom he subdued so ruthlessly. His soldiers also loved him with passionate devotion. When even his favourite tenth legion, worn out in so many wars, was inclined to mutiny on being called on to serve once more in Africa, it appears that a few words from Cæsar were enough to make them follow a general always foremost in bearing hardship and facing peril. Through the greater part of his life he was the idol of a populace very ready to cast down its idols. Soon after his death a comet appeared in the sky, to be hailed by mournful reverence as star of Cæsar's divinity.

The first effect of his fall seems to have been a general stupefaction at Rome. Men hardly knew what to say or do. The Senators kept themselves in the Capitol till it should be seen what was the temper of the mob, before whom the assassins hoped to justify themselves by juggling with the words "tyrant" and "liberty". But soon the voice of the people made itself heard in gathering indignation. The enemies of Cæsar durst not refuse him a public funeral; nor did they forbid the surviving consul, Mark Antony, to pronounce that famous oration in which, as Shakespeare shows, he artfully worked up the popular feeling that rose to a head when he announced the contents of Cæsar's will, leaving his property in public benefactions. Inflamed with rage, the hearers broke into execrations and lamentations; there was hot talk of making the Senate house his funeral pyre; but the mob was persuaded to burn the body where it lay exposed in the Forum. The timbers of the platform, chairs, benches, whatever came to hand, were heaped up to make a pile, round which an excited throng pressed with any contribution to the sacred flames, soldiers throwing in their arms, women their ornaments, and children their toys. "The crowd", notes Froude, "was composed largely of *libertini* (freed slaves) and of provincials whom Cæsar had enfranchised. The demonstrations of sorrow were most remarkable among the Jews, crowds of whom continued for many nights to collect and wail in the Forum at the scene of the singular ceremony."

Before such an outbreak of popular resentment the conspirators might well take alarm. One by one they slunk out of Rome, dispersing to various provinces, to which Cæsar had already appointed their leaders, where, ere long, as did not fail to be noted, they all came to a violent end. At Rome it seemed as if anarchy masquerading as liberty would again submerge that short episode of firm rule. But what happened next may be best told in the story of one who could so master the troubles of the time as to make himself a real heir of Cæsar's authority.

# CHAPTER VII

# Augustus and the Cæsars (44 B.C.–A.D. 96)

The death of Julius Cæsar threw Rome back into that state of tangled struggle in which the pride of the Senate and the violence of popular assemblies had again and again tied knots to be cut by the sword. No one seems now to have guessed by what hand the political machinery would at last be made to run free from such recurrent hitches, and the angry factions forced to drop their swords and daggers so often at one another's throats.

As heir Cæsar had left his grandnephew Caius Julius Cæsar Octavianus, whose original name Octavius, according to Roman custom, was thus transformed by adoption, and who afterwards became so well known in history by the complimentary epithet of Augustus, bestowed on him by the obsequious Senate. Only eighteen at the time of his adopted father's death, he was then serving his apprenticeship to war at a camp in Illyricum, and Cæsar had intended to school him under his own eye in a projected expedition against the Parthians. The youth, crafty and plausible as he was, seems to have recommended himself to the favour of his comrades, for they offered to follow him to Rome to avenge Cæsar's death; but he did not yet see his way to such a bold course of action. Crossing the Adriatic with a few friends, he was hailed by the soldiers in Italy as Cæsar, a name of might that already tended to be a title. He went on to Rome to carry out his uncle's will, in which task he found himself hindered by the ambition of Mark Antony, whose devotion to Cæsar was alloyed by keen regard for his own interests. As surviving consul he now held the reins of authority, backed by Lepidus, who had been the Dictator's Master of the Horse. When Antony refused to give up Cæsar's papers and funds, the young heir raised money on his own credit to pay at once the legacies to the citizens of Rome, thus laying a foundation of popularity on which he would build his absolute power.

For the moment the Roman factions stood at a deadlock, none of them strong enough to overthrow its adversaries. The chief conspirators had been allowed to go off to the commands assigned them by Cæsar—Brutus to Macedonia, Cassius to Syria—but soon Antony got them superseded by proconsuls in his own interest, while he took Cisalpine Gaul for his own province, and Lepidus had Further Gaul and Spain. Behind them at Rome was left the young heir, whom at first these self-seeking politicians seem to have

looked on as no formidable rival. But he, astute and prudent beyond his years, set about making a party for himself both among soldiers and senators, from whom he concealed his real feelings as well as his budding ambition.

The late Dictator's friends being out of the way, Cicero came again to the front, stirring the Senate against Antony in a series of violent philippics, as they were called on the precedent of Demosthenes' famous orations against King Philip. Octavian, playing his difficult game, dissimulated so well as to gain the confidence of Cicero and others who had hailed his uncle's death. When the Senate had been worked up to declare Antony a public enemy, Octavian, having already a strong following in the army, was sent against him along with the consuls for the year (43 B.C.). In the ensuing campaign Antony was defeated, falling back across the Alps to join Lepidus; but both consuls were killed, a loss so much to the advantage of their colleague, that foul play on his part could be suspected.

He came back to Rome as head of a triumphant army, and began to throw off the mask that had deceived Cicero, who vainly talked of him as a "stripling" to be easily got rid of. When the Senate appointed another general, the soldiers proclaimed their loyalty to Cæsar's heir; so by military force he thrust himself on Rome as consul at the age of twenty, with his kinsman, Pedius, for colleague. One of the first acts of the new consuls was to outlaw Cæsar's murderers. For a moment it seemed as if they thus committed themselves to a triangular war, for now Antony and Lepidus advanced from the Alps with a large army, against which the young consul set out from Rome. But instead of a battle they came to a politic arrangement, Lepidus contriving to reconcile Octavian with Antony, and the three agreeing on a division of power and provinces between them for five years, after the example of Cæsar, Pompey, and Crassus.

This was the Second Triumvirate, cemented by torrents of Roman blood shed to avenge Cæsar's. More than 2000 senators and knights were proscribed in a long list, each of the cold-hearted Triumvirs consenting to include friends and kinsmen of his own to gratify the malice or the suspicion of his colleagues. Among the first victims were Cicero, with his brother Quintus, one of Cæsar's able lieutenants in Gaul. They made a futile effort at flight; but the great orator, as if weary of such a turmoiled life, made for his seaside villa, and near it was overtaken by pursuers to whom he gave himself for execution on the spot. The Triumvirs, having occupied Rome with their united army, set up a new reign of terror, under which the proscribed were hunted down by soldiers, or betrayed by their own slaves for blood money. Those who could escape, took refuge with Brutus and Cassius in the East, or in Sicily with Sextus, son of Pompey, who there was able to hold a strong fleet loyal to the republic, while the Triumvirs had the Italian army at their disposal.

31760

Brutus and Cassius were far from being such model republicans as might be expected of tyrannicides. In Asia they had given themselves up to roving collection of tribute and pillage, and it was not till 42 B.C. that they joined their forces to march into Greece with the view of attacking the Triumvirate. There they found Antony and Octavian on the way to meet them, Lepidus left behind to hold down Rome. The legend on which Shakespeare drew makes Brutus oppressed by a foreboding of disaster, and haunted by a spectral form, which to his uneasy conscience may well have taken the shape of Cæsar warning him: "I am thine evil genius; we shall meet at Philippi!" At this town on the boundary between Thrace and Macedonia, notable also as the first place in Europe visited by St. Paul, the armies met for a momentous encounter that did not come off with such dramatic decision as fits a stage tragedy. Brutus and Cassius were encamped on two separate hills, where for some time they prudently declined an engagement. When they did sally out upon the plain, Brutus carried the camp of the enemy, while the other wing met repulse, and, under a delusion that all was lost, Cassius rashly put an end to himself. Brutus fell back into his own camp, and lay there for nearly three weeks before risking another onslaught, in which he was this time routed with great loss; then he also committed suicide, the old Roman way of ending mistakes and misfortunes. Horace was an officer in the beaten army, but his service here, which he frankly confesses to have been somewhat inglorious, did not prevent him from becoming a favourite of Augustus.

Of this long-drawn battle Mark Antony should have the credit, since it appears that Octavian was prostrated by illness, and narrowly escaped being killed in his litter when Brutus broke into the camp. Still in bad health, he returned to Italy, while Antony pursued his career of conquest and plunder into Asia Minor, that so often paid dear for Roman discords. The East took its revenge by corrupting his manliness, as it had tainted Hercules in the old legends. Given up to voluptuous follies, at Tarsus he was visited by Cleopatra in all the pomp of her wealth and beauty; and she made for him a Delilah more fatal than in the case of Cæsar. He followed her to Alexandria, to forget duty, honour, and ambition in dalliance with this too celebrated queen, of whom Pascal says that had her nose been a little shorter the whole face of the earth would have shown a difference.

From Italy, Antony's wife, Fulvia, cast a jealous eye on his enslavement to Cleopatra; and she thought to bring her husband back to Rome by stirring up fresh civil war. Octavian found difficulty in satisfying the demands of his soldiers for land, which they looked for as the due reward for their services. Virgil had now to lament his native Mantuan fields as "too near Cremona", when they were taken to eke out that neighbour colony, confiscated to make farms for clamorous veterans. So much discontent was

stirred up by such evictions that among mutinous soldiers and starving peasants Fulvia and her husband's brother, Lucius, now consul, could raise an army against Octavian, which, indeed, he soon defeated in Etruria.

From another side Mark Antony was startled out of his voluptuous idleness. A remnant of the forces of Brutus and Cassius, falling back to the eastern edge of the empire, had enlisted the warlike Parthians in their cause, with whom they were now sweeping over Asia Minor. This might seem a hint for union rather than discord among the Roman leaders, but Antony, leaving his lieutenant, Ventidius, to face the Parthians, took occasion for a hostile demonstration against his colleagues or competitors for power. He joined his wife and brother, and made alliance with Sextus Pompeius, by whose help he invaded Italy. But reconciling influences were brought to bear; and the death of the ambitious Fulvia went to put off a doubtful struggle. In 40 B.C. the Triumvirs agreed on a fresh division of the Roman world, Antony to take the East, Octavian the West, while Africa was given to Lepidus, whom the other two soon felt able to treat as of little account. To seal their bargain Antony now married Octavia, sister of Octavian, who had already taken Antony's stepdaughter in politic wedding.

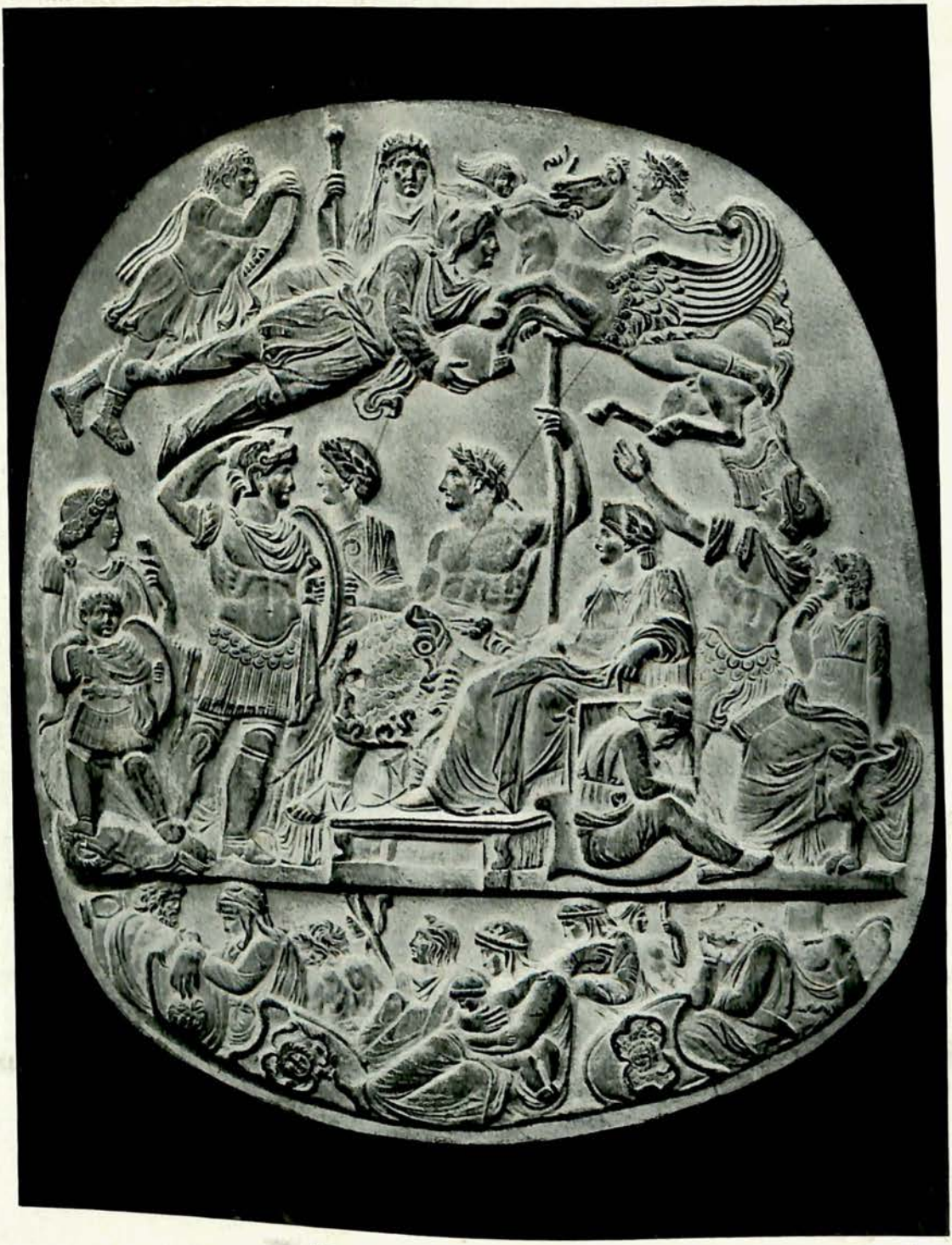
It is tedious work unravelling this involved story of treacheries and broken treaties. Sextus Pompeius was still in possession of Sicily, and by his command of the sea kept Rome short of its corn supply. To end his piratical war on Roman commerce Antony and Octavian offered him a share of power; then an apparent agreement was made between them, when, the two Triumvirs being entertained on board their rival's ship, one of his officers whispered to him: "Shall I make you master of the Roman world?" and had for answer: "You should have done it without asking." This show of friendliness, indeed, proved a false one. Antony refused to give up one of the provinces he had promised to Pompeius, who again began to prey on Rome's provision supply.

For two years Octavian carried on with him an unsuccessful naval war, then was threatened by Antony's again appearing in Italy as an open foe. It is now that Horace again touches history by travelling to Brundusium in the train of Mæcenas, when the poet's facetious tone gives hardly a hint of the momentous business his patron had in hand. That lifelong counsellor of Octavian succeeded in once more patching up a peace between the two Triumvirs, and they agreed to renew their lease of self-conferred power for another five years. Their soldiers appear to have set them a good example by showing no willingness to come to blows with fellow countrymen. In exchange for troops to serve against the Parthians, Antony gave Octavian more than 100 ships to reinforce the new fleet for which he had been constructing a safe harbour on the Bay of Naples. In his friend Vipsanius Agrippa, Octavian had an able naval commander, at last victorious over Sextus Pompeius, who fled to Asia

and was presently slain. Next, Lepidus made himself troublesome by claiming Sicily as part of his African domain; but he fared so ill in this contest that he had to surrender to Octavian, who let him end his life quietly at Rome in the dignified office of Chief Pontiff, as one too contemptible to be dangerous.

Lepidus being shelved and Sextus Pompeius dead, by 35 B.C. but two rivals remained to divide the power of Rome, like Pompey the Great and Julius Cæsar twenty years before. Welcomed at Rome as having given peace to Italy, Octavian continued to court popular favour while preparing for the struggle with Antony to come sooner or later, and gaining military reputation as well as experience in war against barbarians of the northern frontier. Antony, on the other hand, went on degenerating from the brave and skilful soldier he had shown himself in youth. His lieutenants in Asia gained victories for him, but when he had gathered a large army to drive home these successes into the Parthian country, he dallied so long in the arms of Cleopatra and managed so ill in the field that he was fain to retreat with heavy loss. Next year (34 B.C.) he fared better in a raid upon Armenia; then the Romans heard with indignation of his making a triumphal entry into Alexandria, which he thus seemed to rank with Rome as his capital. Here he took on the pomp and trappings of an oriental king in defiance of Roman opinion, not less scandalized by his pretensions to royalty than by his infatuation for the Egyptian queen. Her he now proclaimed his wife, divorcing Octavia, whose offence was that she tried in vain to tear him away from that siren. He legitimized not only his own children by Cleopatra, but Cæsarion as son of Cæsar, an injury that stung Octavian as sorely as the insult to his sister.

When the term of the practically annulled Triumvirate was about to expire, at the end of 32 B.C., the Senate declared war against Cleopatra, who was understood to be stirring up Antony for an attack on Rome. The pair had betaken themselves to Athens; and on the western coast of Greece they collected an army of over 100,000 soldiers, with a fleet of 500 ships. Here Octavian came to meet them with smaller numbers and only half as many ships; but his forces were efficient and loyal, whereas Antony had enlisted Asian auxiliaries, ready to desert him at the first mishap. His behaviour appears explicable only by the ancient proverb that the gods send madness on whom they would destroy. He let his huge fleet be cooped up in the Ambracian Gulf between Greece and Epirus, till want of supplies forced him to a sally that brought on an action off the promontory of Actium, on which his army lay entrenched. It seemed as if numbers might have carried the day, when, to the amazement of both parties, the Egyptian contingent made off in full flight, headed by Cleopatra and followed by Antony, who, on rejoining his mistress, is said to have sat for three days in silence, bowed down by shame. Finding themselves deserted by their commander, the remainder of his ships surrendered to Octavian, as presently did his army without



THE FAMILY OF THE CAESARS

Sardonyx Cameo (12 in. × 10½ in.): one of the most famous examples of this art. Sent from Constantinople by Baldwin II to Saint Louis. Now in the Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris.
In the centre are seated Tiberius and Livia; before them stand Germanicus (armed), Antonia at his side, his wife Agrippina and the youthful Caligula at his back. Behind Livia are the younger Drusus and Julia Livilla. Above the central group are deified members of the Julian house. The lower panel shows German and other captives in attitudes of dejection and woe.

a blow. Thus the battle of Actium (31 B.C.) made Cæsar's heir master of the Roman world.

Antony and Cleopatra had fled to Alexandria, from which they vainly besought the conqueror to leave them alone with the world well lost for love. When he proved determined to drive them to extremity they talked of poisoning themselves, of escaping by the Red Sea beyond the reach of Rome; but all they did was helplessly to await the vengeance of Octavian, delayed by discontent among his troops that took him back to Italy. When next year he descended upon Egypt, Antony for a moment roused himself from his reckless debauchery to make an attempt at resistance, in which both ships and soldiers went over to the enemy. A false report of Cleopatra's death turned his sword against himself, and he was drawn dying into the monument in which she had shut herself up, where she too made an attempt at suicide when the Roman soldiers burst into it. For all her outcry of grief over that ruined paramour, she is accused of having tried her charms upon Octavian in turn; but him she found cold and stern. Learning that she was destined to be led captive to Rome, the once enchanting queen, with a last request that she might be allowed to share her lover's tomb, killed herself, as was believed, by the bite of an asp brought to her hidden in a basket of flowers. She owes to Horace the most romantic view of the end put to what seems a worthlessly sensual life:—

> Amid her ruined halls she stood
> Unblenched, and fearless to the end
> Grasped the fell snakes, that all her blood
> Might with the cold black venom blend,
> Death's purpose flushing in her face;
> Nor to our ships the glory gave,
> That she, no vulgar dame, should grace
> A triumph, crownless and a slave.—*Conington's Translation.*

The enormous wealth of Egypt Octavian seized on for his own, which enabled him to pay off the debts that had hitherto hampered his ambitious career, and gave him a princely revenue to spend on confirming his power in Rome. Treating Egypt as his private estate, he restored to it perhaps as much as he took by setting soldiers to scour out the canals that distributed the Nile's fertilizing waters. When he came back (29 B.C.), to be welcomed with such honours as a triple triumph for the successive victories which the troubles and uncertainties of the time had not yet allowed him to celebrate, he found himself in the same position as Julius Cæsar after the fall of Pompey. The state lay even more completely at his command, every leader of the old republic being dead or put to silence, when, as Tacitus says, wealth and honours could be held only by the title of fitness for servility. Now that the temple of Janus might be shut for the third time in Roman history, patricians and people were thoroughly sick of

anarchy, and willing to accept a master who offered them peace both at home and abroad.

Repeatedly elected consul, the second Cæsar could now have assumed any title he chose, but in his artful policy of affected moderation he contented himself with that of Princeps, readily bestowed on him by the Senate. This ancient body he purged and dignified, professing to rule as its servant, yet taking effectual means to be its master. Appointments to the older provinces were left in its hands, while he reserved the proconsulships of less settled borderlands for himself and his deputies, so as to give him the control of armies that might always be marched upon Rome. Scrupulously he professed to keep up the old republican magistracies, yet contrived that they should be filled by his nominees, as was not difficult whilst he could preserve his popularity with the mob and thus control the clamorous public assemblies. In the reign of his successor these ceased to be held, the right of election passing to the Senate, as the real power of all public offices had been absorbed by the prince. Except for spasmodic bursts of the old turbulence, the people of Rome gave up concerning itself with politics, looking slavishly to the government and the nobles for demoralizing bounties of money and corn as for the brutalizing spectacles of the arena by which they could usually be kept in good humour. So for the bribe of *Panem et circenses* they let themselves forget the glory and the freedom of the past, submitting to rulers appointed by palace intrigues, by the consent of the degraded Senate, or, in time, by mere military force.

Octavian now did not put himself forward as Julius Cæsar's heir, concerned rather to make men forget the late violent revolutions and posing as a restorer of the old commonwealth. Under a mask of republican simplicity he went on raising the autocratic throne that would stand so long. At first he may have been feeling his way, and fortune aided him by the lack of any commanding spirit of opposition. Two years after taking on his authority he made a show of resigning it, but was implored to keep the princeship by a flattering Senate that now bestowed on him the style of Augustus, to become the generic name of his successors, as Cæsar grew into a title of the imperial house. Later on the populace rose in riot when he scrupled to accept the title of Dictator, under which they besought him to deliver them in a season of plague and scarcity. He preferred to exercise supreme power in such time-honoured offices as tribune and censor, and it was at no open prompting from him that the people hailed their welcome master "Father of his country". After the death of Lepidus he added to his dignities that of Pontifex Maximus, thus becoming head of the church as well as the state. Before his own death he saw himself worshipped as a god, though he discouraged such superstition at and near Rome, permitting it in remote dominions for which the world's ruler might well seem a son of heaven. His pride was practically politic: swelling titles were not so much to him as real power, which gradually he drew into a privy council of his intimates, tried

adherents like Mæcenas and Agrippa, who were his chief ministers, while the high-sounding magistracies of Rome became empty titles, their functions passing into the hands of new officers, prefects, and curators, created by Augustus. So, without ostentation, bit by bit, as much as possible on old foundations, he changed the nominal republic into what Gibbon defines as "an absolute Government disguised by the form of a commonwealth. The masters of the Roman world surrounded their throne with darkness, concealed their irresistible strength, and humbly professed themselves the accountable ministers of the Senate, whose supreme decrees they dictated and obeyed." They would grow more haughty when time confirmed their despotism; but the author of it, according to Suetonius, indulged or affected a prudent modesty in his personal pretensions.

He always abhorred the title of "Lord" as ill-omened and offensive. And when, in a play, performed at the theatre, at which he was present, these words were introduced, "O just and gracious lord", and the whole company, with joyful acclamations, testified their approbation of them as applied to him, he instantly put a stop to their indecent flattery, by waving his hand and frowning sternly, and next day publicly declared his displeasure in a proclamation. He never afterwards would suffer himself to be addressed in that manner, even by his own children or grandchildren, either in jest or earnest, and forbad them the use of all such complimentary expressions to one another. He rarely entered any city or town, or departed from it, except in the evening or the night, to avoid giving any person the trouble of complimenting him. During his consulships, he commonly walked the streets on foot; but at other times, rode in a close carriage. He admitted to court even plebeians, in common with people of the higher ranks; receiving the petitions of those who approached him with so much affability, that he once jocosely rebuked a man by telling him: "You present your memorial with as much hesitation as if you were offering money to an elephant". On senate-days, he used to pay his respects to the Conscript Fathers only in the house, addressing them each by name as they sat, without any prompter; and on his departure he bade each of them farewell, while they retained their seats. In the same manner, he maintained with many of them a constant intercourse of mutual civilities, giving them his company upon occasions of any particular festivity in their families; until he became advanced in years, and was incommoded by the crowd at a wedding.—*Bohn's Edition.*

An iron hand beneath that glove of velvet is shown in one act of justice with which Augustus is credited that illustrates also the cruelty of the age. Every rich household contained hundreds of slaves, treated with reckless severity, when in the case of a master being murdered the law condemned all slaves under his roof to death, a wholesale execution more than once carried out. The emperor being a guest at the house of one Pollio, a slave lad had the ill luck to break a crystal goblet, and his angry master ordered him to be thrown into a fishpond as food for lampreys. The poor wretch threw himself at the feet of Augustus, begging the favour of a more merciful death; then for once the autocrat appears moved to natural indignation, for he not only

set the suppliant free, but had all Pollio's crystal broken before his eyes as a forcible lesson in humanity.

A recent biographer, Mr. Firth, seems aptly to style this artful prince "Managing Director" under the constitution he set on foot. During a long lease of power, peaceful in comparison with the times that had gone before, Augustus was able to found firmly an empire in which he incorporated the ruins of the republic. He had no more civil wars to face, and the Roman arms were victorious abroad during the greater part of his life. He completed the conquest of Gaul, Spain, and Asia, work that required prolonged absences from Rome, though he himself did not win much of the martial glory freely ascribed to him by his flatterers. His generals drove back the barbarians from the frontiers with such renown that the formidable Parthians were fain to seek peace at the price of giving up the trophies and prisoners taken from Crassus, whereby the fortunate ruler seemed to wipe out a national disgrace. Twice again in his time the gates of Janus could be shut. The more settled provinces received his steady rule as a relief from the recurrent sufferings brought upon them in those long struggles of rival ambition. Most of them long broken in to one or other despotic yoke, they found the empire less oppressive than the government of republican proconsuls whose main concern had been to enrich themselves during a limited or precarious term of office. The emperor's more lasting interest was to put bounds to such rapacity, as a landlord makes a better husbandman of farms that might be exhausted by needy tenants. The administrators commissioned by Augustus were bound to a stricter account of their stewardship than under the system that gave the plunder of a province as the reward of a successful politician. Then his satraps, as was the rule with Roman governors, made a point of meddling as little as possible with the life of dependencies willing to acknowledge the supremacy of Rome and to pay their fixed tribute. The subject states, in different degrees, were largely allowed to keep their own religion, laws, and customs, and by their own magistrates to manage such matters as did not concern the Gallios of Rome. This considerate policy had such effect that half-barbarous peoples learned to look up to Rome as a mother of the civilization she did not press upon them, but which spread all the faster among provincials willing to take copies from the greatness brought home to their lands by roads, posts, and bridges between her far-set fortresses and temples.

The empire was, in the terms of our day, a Federal system of home rule, bound together by allegiance to the Senate and people of Rome, whose device S.P.Q.R. now took the form of a god-like despotism. At home Augustus showed himself as munificent as he was affable and clement on principle. He spent vast sums in adorning Rome with temples, theatres, and monuments, and his favourites vied with him in the same magnificence. His well-known boast was that he found the city brick and left it marble. Not less famous is his patronage of authors in what came to be renowned as the Augustan

AUGUSTUS CAESAR

*Statue in the Vatican Museum, Rome*

Photo. Anderson

age of Roman literature. The rich Mæcenas figures as Horace's special patron, but Mæcenas was in this matter the agent or colleague of a master who liked the society of cultured and amusing men. Under such encouragement Virgil produced his masterpiece of fond patriotism and polished taste, and Livy the history which was less true to fact than to Roman pride in a glorious past. The poet flattered his patron by likening him to a god—*Divisum imperium cum Jove Caesar habet*—but that some degree of free speech was allowed is shown by Livy's praise, not only of Cicero, but of Brutus and Cassius. The satirist Horace lavished courtly compliments both on Augustus and on Mæcenas. Tibullus and Propertius also flourished in this age. Its most popular poet seems to have been Ovid, whose licentious muse, however, found little favour with an autocrat professing austere virtue as a rule of life. Like Mæcenas, Augustus himself was an author, whose works have perished, among them an autobiography of his own early life that would have been valuable as a document for the history of his time.

Cold and calculating as he was in youth, we could believe all this potentate might tell us of his conduct and motives no more trustfully than what was written of him by his flatterers. Yet we need not judge him a mere hypocrite, though he by no means lived up to the moral precepts he was given to enforcing on others. Accused in whispers even of repulsive vices, he at least paid homage to virtue, seeing clearly how it made for the health of the state. Capable of arbitrary severity at times, while inclined rather to conciliating his ill wishers, he tried to purify the administration of justice, snubbed the informers who infested Rome, and put down the robber bands bred through the country by civil war. When two augurs, it was said, could hardly look one another in the face without laughing, Augustus laboured to restore the stately religion of old Rome, corrupted by exotic superstition as well as home-bred disbelief. Under his influence there came a marked revival of pagan devotion, filling men's eyes when in an out-of-the-way corner of the empire was born, fourteen years before Augustus' death,[1] a child in whose name the Olympian gods would be overthrown: thus obscurely dawned the new era in which "the doubts of the academy, and the pride of the portico, and the fasces of the lictor, and the swords of twenty legions were humbled in the dust".

In morals, also, by precept, and in some respects by example, Augustus strove to check the licentiousness and extravagance of his age, rebuked by Horace in no very bitter spirit. The master of the world made a show of simplicity in his habits. Always weakly in health, he did well to content himself with philosophically frugal fare. His palace seemed modest beside the luxurious dwellings of nobles who trembled at his nod. He had his clothes made at home by the

[1] The year of Christ's birth has been taken as 753 A.U.C. (*Ab Urbe Condita*) of Roman history. The true date seems rather to be 4 B.C. It need hardly be said that the new Era was not at once recognized; it came into use at Rome in the sixth century, spreading over Europe about A.D. 1000.

ladies of his family, as pattern of the old Roman housewifery. But it does not appear that he was able to set a fashion of domestic virtues, in which, indeed, his own life was not exemplary, while more than one member of his family gave scandal even to the society exposed by Horace and Ovid.

Fortunate in so many respects, Augustus was not so in family life. Like his great uncle he hoped in vain for a son to whom he might hand down the state he had formed; and throughout his reign Rome knew not for certain who should be its heir. His first wife left only a daughter, Julia, married to her cousin Claudius Marcellus, son of Octavia, by whom she had a son, that Marcellus whose youthful promise was lamented by Virgil in the famous lines that go to hint him the chosen successor of his grandfather.

> No youth shall equal hopes of glory give,
> No youth afford so great a cause to grieve.
> The Trojan honour and the Roman boast,
> Admired when living and adored when lost.
> Mirror of ancient faith in early youth!
> Undaunted worth, inviolable truth!
> No foe, unpunished, in the fighting field,
> Shall dare thee, foot to foot, with sword and shield,
> Much less oppose in arms thy matchless force,
> When thy sharp spurs shall urge thy foaming horse.
> Ah! couldst thou break through Fate's severe decree,
> A new Marcellus shall arise in thee!—*Dryden's Æneid.*

These lines, spoken prophetically by the shade of Anchises, are said to have affected the bereaved mother of Marcellus to swooning. That possible prodigy—for a court poet's laudations are always open to doubt—dying soon after his marriage, Augustus wedded Julia to Vipsanius Agrippa, the friend of his youth and his right hand in war, by whom she had five children. Agrippa seemed the most fit successor, till he died more than twenty years before Augustus. The emperor's second wife, Livia, bore him no children, but she had two sons, Tiberius and Drusus, by a former husband whom Augustus, heedless of his moral professions, had compelled her to divorce. Throughout she used her influence to get these stepsons adopted as heirs of the empire; and both of them by their military achievements seemed deserving of such destiny, while the younger, Drusus, was more popular than the sullen Tiberius. The succession seemed secured to Tiberius when, after Agrippa's death, Augustus forced upon him an unhappy and fruitless marriage with the widowed Julia. She, thrice wedded for reasons of state, had some excuse for a dissolute life that long remained unknown to or winked at by her fond father. But at last her adulteries became so notorious that Augustus hardened his heart to banish her. The elder daughter of Agrippa and Julia along with her mother's name inherited her vices, which, towards the end of the emperior's reign, brought upon her the same punishment of

exile to a small island; and the mysterious banishment of Ovid to the stormy shores of the Euxine, happening about the same time, has been supposed to have had some connection with her crimes. Her two brothers, Caius and Lucius Cæsar, were for a time in high favour, when Tiberius retired from the court as if giving up his hope of the succession. Both those princes also died young, and a younger brother, Agrippa Postumus, was so dull-witted and depraved as for some offence to be banished to an island like his mother. Tiberius, whose harsh temper seems to have stood in the way of his talents, was now recalled; then the succession seemed ensured to him by the need of his victorious sword. His nephew and adopted son, Germanicus, married to Agrippina, youngest daughter of Julia, the best of her family, was another possible candidate for the throne, of which all we know of this young prince indicates him as the most worthy.

The sickly Augustus outlived so many natural and adopted children to see his last years clouded by peril and disgrace. He had pushed the Roman empire beyond the Rhine and the Danube, where for a time the Teuton hordes could not withstand his legions. In these wars Drusus died by accident; then the early years of our era brought an unfavourable turn for the conquerors. In the Danubian provinces Tiberius was almost overwhelmed by a revolt that for a moment threatened to sweep into Italy. Among the German tribes arose a national hero, Arminius, who in a three-days' forest fight (A.D. 9) annihilated the army of the Roman general Varus and drove the eagles back to the Rhine. "Varus, what have you done with my legions?" was the bitter cry of the emperor's old age, when on every side he felt his state shaken by hostility without and muttered discontent at home. He had lived too long. It was all Tiberius and Germanicus could do to check the exultant barbarians on the drawn-back frontier within which Augustus saw well to restrict his too rashly expanded empire.

At Nola, in Campania, in A.D. 14, the emperor lay down upon his theatrical deathbed, comparing himself to an actor who had played his part well. Germanicus was absent on the Rhine; and Tiberius had set out for his own post in Illyria, his stepfather having accompanied him part of the way, when he was hastily recalled by his mother, Livia, who never ceased to watch over his interests, and in that age of whispered scandal did not fail to be suspected of hastening her husband's death. Tiberius and his son, Drusus, brought the body to Rome for stately burial in the family mausoleum built by Augustus, that, like other works of his, would stand for more than a thousand years. Without opposition Tiberius then became head of the world. Augustus, who always put the substance before the show of power, is spoken of as the first *imperator*; but this title, originally given by the acclamations of the soldiery to a successful general, was granted by him to more than one member of his family; and only under his successors was it reserved for the head of the state, who, whatever his origin, would henceforth claim the proud name of Cæsar.

Tiberius began his reign with the same affectations of modest reluctance as had served Augustus; but before long he showed the morose and cruel temper which made him a more typical despot. His first act was to have Agrippa Postumus killed as a possible rival. He had more to fear from the popular Germanicus, then in command of an army on service, who proved loyal to the new emperor, yet was transferred from a victorious career to Asia, and there died by poison at the instigation of his jealous kinsman, went the whisper; but in those days of crime and suspicion any natural disease might be attributed to foul play. His two eldest sons were cruelly done to death, the youngest, Caligula, being reserved by the childless Tiberius, it is said, in the cynical design of leaving a successor more hateful than himself: Tacitus, indeed, declares him chosen by Augustus for much the same reason. So firmly had the empire been established that Tiberius was able to destroy the last show of liberty, and to be as much feared as hated for arbitrary executions at the prompting of a diseased mind. At the end of his life he retired to the beautiful island of Capri, where, in gloomy seclusion, he gave himself up to unspeakable debaucheries, leaving Rome to be governed by his favourite Sejanus, commander of the Prætorian guards, a body of some 10,000 picked men raised by Augustus; but he had taken politic care to keep these myrmidons in the background, whereas Tiberius quartered them about Rome as weapons of his tyranny. When Sejanus was seen plotting to take the place of such a master, Tiberius had him slain with his partisans. His successor in command of the guard is said to have hastened the end of the aged emperor, the news of whose death was hailed with joy at Rome, yet so much had public spirit been paralysed that, according to Suetonius, the execution of victims already doomed by him was carried out as if he were alive.

His successor, Caius Cæsar Caligula (A.D. 37), gave the Romans cause to regret even Tiberius. Brought up in the army of Germanicus, he had been a pet of the soldiery, who nicknamed him *Caligula* (little boot), from his wearing this part of the military equipment, as a modern officer's child might be arrayed in a kilt or a sailor suit. He came to power at the age of twenty-five, and for a little seemed to justify the enthusiasm that welcomed a son of the not-forgotten Germanicus. But presently he broke out into what seems criminal madness, proving himself a monster of vice, cruelty, and caprice, whose delight was to witness the tortures he ordered. He is reported as uttering a wish that the Roman people had only one neck, to be cut off by him at a blow. Another story represents him as desiring to bestow the consulship on a favourite horse, kept in surroundings of profuse luxury. The marvel is that he was suffered nearly four years before being slain by officers of his own guard. Tacitus is the bitterest accuser of these Cæsars, and his books relating to the period of Caligula have been lost, but all other accounts of his reign are in a tale of execration; and Mr. Baring Gould, who has laboured to lay a coat of whitewash on the blackened character of Tiberius, finds no good word to say for the next emperor.

THE TRIUMPH OF TIBERIUS

Sardonyx Cameo (8⅝ in. × 7½ in.); the celebrated *Gemma Augustea.* Vienna Collection. Augustus, enthroned beside the goddess Roma; Tiberius descending from triumphal chariot.

Photo. Alinari

THE TRIUMPH OF TITUS

*From the bas relief on the Arch of Titus, Rome*

Note the figure of Victory behind the general. The horses are led by the goddess Roma.

After the death of Caligula (A.D. 41) the consuls of the year were inclined to take this occasion for restoring the republic, as might have been done but for the Prætorian guard, that often now would have the loudest voice in revolutions. Claudius, nephew of Tiberius and uncle of Caligula, had hidden himself in terror behind a curtain, and was dragged forth by the excited soldiery, not to death as he expected, but to sudden exaltation, in which the scared Senate saw well to concur when the mob also hailed Claudius as emperor. This younger brother of Germanicus, grandson of Mark Antony by his mother Antonia, daughter of Octavia, was feeble in mind and body, and seems to have made a butt for all the family, till at the age of fifty he thus came to be pushed on to the world's throne. Amazed by his new fortunes, and still in dread of assassination, he at first showed a disposition to rule well, but soon fell under the temptations of power, while his gluttony, awkwardness, and inactivity made him a ludicrous figurehead for the state, throughout his reign mainly steered by palace intrigues between the wives and favourites who pulled the strings of such a puppet. He had more turn for pedantic authorship than for arms, but, taking a military expedition to be essential to his reputation, he got up one to Britain, against which the crazy Caligula had marched to content himself by making his soldiers gather shells on the opposite shore. An army having been already landed in the island, Claudius spent a few days in Britain to proclaim himself its conqueror; but his generals had a hard struggle with the national hero, Caractacus, who was at last brought captive to Rome. On the score of his brief campaign the emperor dubbed himself Britannicus, a name by which his son came to be better known. This was the real beginning of the conquest of Britain, the only addition now made to the empire, for which Augustus had prescribed as boundaries the Rhine, the Danube, and the Euphrates, with the deserts of Africa and the western ocean to round off the limits of Rome's dominion.

Claudius seems the James I of the Cæsars, and his reign of over a dozen years shows to what servility the Roman people had sunk. He was much under the influence of clever freedmen who had been his associates in private life, as of two notorious wives. More than one of his favourites appear in our Bible story: the Felix before whom Paul pleaded when this low-born courtier had been given a provincial governorship, and the Narcissus in whose household the apostle could greet certain converts (*Romans*, xvi, 11); the Herod Agrippa of the *Acts* was also a friend both of Caligula and of Claudius. Narcissus was long the chief wirepuller of the latter's authority, having for rival the emperor's wife, Messalina, till her conduct grew so infamous, even in that shameless age, that Narcissus could procure her execution. Claudius then married his own niece, Agrippina the younger, daughter of Germanicus, who by a former husband had a son, the future emperor Nero. This masterful woman was able to override the influence of Narcissus, her chief aim being to put aside Messalina's son, Britannicus, in favour of her own boy. When Nero at fourteen assumed

the *toga virilis*, the young Roman's mark of manhood, it was with a degree of ceremony that seemed to distinguish him as the heir, a natural enough choice, for he was older than Britannicus, and had at least as much of the blood of Cæsars, among whom descent from father to son was as yet unexampled. As pledge of his adoption, two years later he was married to the emperor's daughter by Messalina. Claudius died in A.D. 54, according to Tacitus poisoned by Agrippina, who may also, as is told of Livia and Augustus, have concealed his death till she had everything ready for proclaiming her son as his successor. So at the age of seventeen Nero became master of the Roman world.

This last of the Cæsars by blood has come to pass for the worst tyrant of all, his name a proverb for cruelty and licentiousness. Yet he was not without dispositions which, in a private station, might have been cultivated to a decent life, while on the throne his very talents, or the vanity of them, made him a prey to flattery, jealousy, and the unbounded caprices of an "artistic temperament". His renowned tutor, Seneca, found little taste for philosophy in a youth who "fancied himself" as a singer, dancer, and versifier, and, like any modern spendthrift, took keenly to chariot driving and racing. His chosen friends were a set of Bardolphs and Falstaffs, in whose company he delighted to seek disreputable adventures by night that sometimes turned out roughly for the disguised prince. To such associates and to so unworthy pursuits he gave up his early years, leaving the government in the hands of his mother, of Seneca, and of Burrus, commander of the Prætorian guard, an informal regency that appears to have acted with some regard to public welfare.

But soon Nero, intoxicated by power, grew so unnaturally heartless in his greed of bloodshed that it is charitable to take him for insane. It was to be expected that he would rid himself of Britannicus, that brother too near the throne. But Agrippina, whom on his accession he had cause to style the "best of mothers", saw herself sorely disappointed in the hope to dominate her son like her doting husband. With deliberate cruelty the serpent she had nursed brought about her murder at Baiæ, on the Bay of Naples, which made a fashionable seaside resort for Rome. He murdered his wife Octavia also, to marry a wanton, whom he killed by a brutal kick. One gigantic crime is not so well proved against him. A fire broke out in Rome, which raged for a week through the greater part of the city; and the story went that he had kindled it to amuse himself with a representation of the burning of Troy. To turn away this suspicion from himself he charged the conflagration on the growing sect of Christians, mostly poor and humble aliens, despised by the proud nobles, and easily held up to the ignorant mob's execraiton. This charge made excuse for the first persecution of sufferers whose real crime was their austere morality and their secret meetings for worship. They had given special offence by standing scrupulously aloof from the bloodshed of the circus, in which the unhappy Christians were now exposed to be devoured by lions and other beasts of prey before the gloating eyes of the populace. Some,

sewed up in skins of wolves and bears, were torn by savage dogs; others were impaled, crucified, or dragged to death by wild bulls. Rows of them, wrapped in shirts of pitch, are said to have been burned as torches to light up the gardens of the palace. St. Paul was about this time a prisoner in Rome, where tradition makes him martyred under Nero; and the lurid visions of the Apocalypse are supposed to be coloured by those sickening inflictions that watered the seed of a church destined to spread over half the world.

We may recall how the great fire of London was blamed on the Papists. Nero, who is represented as playing the lyre and singing appropriate verses of his own while he looked down on blazing Rome from the roof of his palace, was now indeed reckless enough for any freak of destruction; but Tacitus states that he was absent when the fire broke out, as likely as not by accident in a close-packed city containing from one to two millions of people. The imperial artist gratified his tastes by having the streets rebuilt in a more roomy manner, beginning also a magnificent "Golden House" for himself. This expense, on the top of his ordinary extravagance, called for exactions that provoked discontent; then a conspiracy against him was quenched in an orgy of torture and slaughter. Seneca, that edifying but not very consistent moralist, whose influence had for a time put some slight check on his ungrateful pupil's profligacy, was commanded to commit suicide, as he did in the then fashionable manner of opening his veins and stimulating the flow of blood by a hot bath. His nephew, Lucan, author of the *Pharsalia*, met the same fate, brought on him by the emperor's poetic jealousy, as he is said to have killed a rival who sang louder than himself. Other friends of his youth he ruthlessly did to death or banished, and no one about him could feel safe for a day. As for Lucan, he could hardly expect to live long after writing such verses as:

> Liberty, long wearied by our crimes,
> Forsakes us for some better barbarous climes;
> Beyond the Rhine and Tanais she flies,
> To snowy mountains and to frozen skies,
> While Rome, who long pursued that chiefest good,
> O'er fields of slaughter and through seas of blood,
> In slavery her abject state shall mourn,
> Nor dare to hope the goddess will return.

Almost to the end Nero kept the mob in good humour by spending lavishly at Rome the wealth wrung from oppressed provinces, notably on the shows of the amphitheatre, in which he loved to appear as a principal performer, and to make the Roman nobles degrade themselves to actors and dancers. Such exhibitions of himself seemed as great a crime as his cruelty in the eyes of dignified senators, who had yet to look on and applaud their whimsical tyrant, if not to figure beside him on the stage. Towards the end of his reign nothing would satisfy him but visiting Greece to show off his accomplishments at the

historic games, where he was allowed to win as many prizes as he pleased, and with a shipload of wreaths came back to enter Rome in theatrical triumph, little aware how near was his catastrophe.

Real conquests were carried out in Nero's name, but he had no share of their glory. The revolt of the Britons under Boadicea was put down by one of his generals. Another beat back the Parthians, and for his reward was recalled and ordered to commit suicide. When others were punished thus for being too successful or popular with their soldiers, it is no wonder that the emperor's lieutenants ceased to be loyal. One of them having made a futile revolt in Gaul, Galba, head of the army in Spain, followed the example with better success. Nero at first tried to laugh off this rebellion, but he took alarm when Galba's legions marched upon Rome, where the Prætorian guards seemed ready to turn against a master as hateful as ridiculous.

When fully roused to his danger, the wretched prince had not spirit to make a stand, but with two or three attendants fled from his deserted palace by night, after vainly seeking courage to commit suicide. Next morning, in a mean hiding-place, he heard how the Senate had roused itself to doom him as a public enemy; then a noise of horse-hoofs urged him to pierce his throat with fumbling hands, and the stab had to be driven home by one of the still faithful servants who bid him know there was no way but this. The pursuers burst in to find him dying miserably at the age of thirty years, lived so as to make him prematurely old. "What an artist is lost in me!" were reported as last words of one whose ruling passion thus appears in death.

The first imperial race being extinct, the best title to empire would be Cæsar's own, the favour of the soldiery. The Roman legions, some quarter of a million strong, with perhaps as many provincial auxiliaries, were kept remote on the frontiers, divided into separate armies, whose generals had a chance to work on the old Roman virtues still flourishing under military discipline when loyalty and public spirit withered among the citizens. At Rome itself stood the pampered prætorian garrison, that by bounties and promises could readily be brought to throw their swords into the scale of a disputed succession.

Galba, marching to overthrow Nero, made some profession of acting as general of the Senate and people, but his troops proclaimed him emperor, and there was no more question of restoring the republic. On him Tacitus passed the famous sentence that all men would have judged him fit to rule had he not ruled. The chief fault charged against him was his niggardliness, which might rather have counted as a virtue beside the boundless extravagance of Nero. But this and his severity did not please the Prætorian guards, who after a few months let themselves be seduced to murder Galba and put his comrade Otho on the throne. His reign was even shorter. Already the army of the Rhine had proclaimed their general Vitellius, who marched into Italy; and Otho killed himself after a lost battle. Nor did Vitellius, renowned as a glutton, long enjoy the perilous fruit of his victory. The legions in Asia set up as emperor Flavius Vespasianus, then engaged in quell-

ing a rebellion of the Jews. An army of his partisans came to storm Rome with enormous slaughter, Vitellius being brutally slain. After recognizing three emperors in a year, the Senate was fain to accept Vespasian, who came to Rome as master (A.D. 70), leaving his son Titus to finish the obstinate siege and crushing overthrow of Jerusalem, where the Temple was destroyed about the same time as the sacred Capitol of Rome fell in flames kindled by civil war.

The beginning of what is known as the Flavian dynasty marks a new departure in Roman history. Galba, Otho, and Vitellius, though not of Cæsar's blood, were aristocratic by birth. Vespasian was of humble origin, raised by his own deeds to command, and specially distinguished by services in Britain. He is said to have been chosen as general against the rebellious Jews not so much on account of his military talent as for the obscurity of fortune that seemed a pledge against ambition on his part. The same authority, Suetonius, relates how a master of the world was then looked for from Judæa, and describes Vespasian as working in Egypt miracles like those of Christ. He at least did wonders in the way of restoring order at Rome, where in a reign of ten years this business-like usurper, with a vein of rough humour and soldierly common sense, turned out a good manager of the distracted state, putting the finances on a sounder footing and adorning the city with public buildings such as the still imposing Colosseum, while he strengthened its defences on the frontier. One act recorded against him was his expulsion of Stoic and Cynic philosophers who barked too loudly at the heels of his military government; but on the whole he seems the best of the Cæsars, who was none of them by birth.

That Vespasian meant to found a dynasty is shown by his taking the style of Augustus and dubbing his two sons Cæsar, a title that now came to mark the heir to the throne. The elder brother, Titus, was made his father's colleague in the government, who succeeded him at his death with general applause. He laid himself out for popularity, and bid fair to do well, but he had faults that make it doubtful if he would have kept up the good character he bears for his short reign. At the beginning of it happened the great eruption of Vesuvius that destroyed Pompeii and Herculaneum (A.D. 79), to be unearthed in modern times as relics of the life described in too accusing colours by the contemporary poets Juvenal and Martial. Pliny, the voluminous naturalist, let himself be drawn by scientific curiosity to perish in this commotion, that, as his nephew, Pliny the Younger, tells us, was taken by many for the end of the world.

The early death of Titus was not without suspicion of poison, when the purple[1] passed to his brother Domitian (A.D. 81), a vain and vicious

[1] Purple, as an expensive dye obtained specially from Tyrian *murex*, was always taken as a sign of wealth and power. While the toga of a Roman senator was marked by a broad, and that of the equestrian order by a narrow stripe, the emperors assumed a purple robe or mantle that became identified with their state, The phrase "born in the purple", however, seems to have had another origin, being a misreading for a *porphyry* chamber of the palace at Constantinople in which an imperial heir should be brought into the world.

prince who relapsed into the cruelty of former emperors. His childish passion for killing flies, that made a jest among those about him, developed into a cruel persecution of the Christians as well as the philosophers, by which he made sure of a bad name in history. His reign of fifteen years is also defamed by his jealously recalling Agricola from the conquest of Britain set on foot under Vespasian. The tyranny of this "vulgar Nero" growing unbearable, he was murdered (A.D. 96), the fate of all but three of those twelve Cæsars that end ignominiously with his name. Henceforth the titles of *Augustus* and *Cæsar* become distinct, the one denoting the reigning emperor, the other his designated heir.

## CHAPTER VIII

# The Antonines (A.D. 96–180)

With the Flavian dynasty ends a period of Roman history that for the most part seems a nightmare of horrors. In the second century the empire entered upon a new phase under a succession of nobler princes who showed how the burden of despotism might be borne without proving a curse. Two of those emperors were men of such rare virtue that the age of the Antonines stands forth as a sunset glow in Rome's decline. Save the first, each emperor of this series had for title the heedful choice of his predecessor, till the greatest of all fell into fatal error by trusting the succession to an unworthy son.

On the death of Domitian (A.D. 96) there was set up in his place Nerva, a well-meaning old man, who for two years ruled humanely, then died after adopting the Spanish soldier Trajan as his colleague and heir. So Rome passed under the government of a provincial, a sign how the distinction between Roman citizens and Roman subjects was being obliterated. He had already been chosen consul, for still the old forms of government were honoured in name, the emperors themselves being often invested with an office eclipsed under the shadow of their throne.

Trajan, not troubling himself much about the constitutional fictions respected by former rulers, kept order like the soldier he was, his chief fault being a too great love of military glory. By exploits displayed on his famous monument, the column of which a copy is in our South Kensington Museum, he conquered the new province of Dacia beyond the Danube, and extended the Roman frontier also in Africa. At the end of his life he marched against the Parthians, whom he drove beyond the Tigris, but was too old to emulate further the feats of Alexander. He died in Asia, A.D. 117, amid such a storm of insurrections that his successor, Hadrian, saw well to withdraw from those Eastern conquests. Under Nerva and Trajan the great classic Tacitus was free to publish that damning record which is our fullest account of the wicked Cæsars; and at this time also Plutarch came to hold up better examples in his illustrious lives from the Greek and Roman past.

Hadrian, who owed his elevation to the favour of Trajan's wife, had grave faults as a man, but he was an able statesman and accomplished scholar, and did much to reorganize the empire in a peaceful reign of over twenty years. His genius was not for war, but for

art, in which he showed himself more of a Greek than a Roman. He spent much of his time in travelling through the provinces, where, as at Rome, he displayed a mania for erecting temples and other public buildings. It seems doubtful if the wall called by his name was built by him on his visit to Britain, but it at least represents his policy of restricting and fortifying the frontiers of the empire. His massive mausoleum has been altered into the Castle of St. Angelo, still so conspicuous at Rome. Else he is perhaps best remembered by the lines addressed to his soul on what proved a painful deathbed (*Animula, vagula, blandula,* &c.) familiar to us in Byron's translation:—

> Ah! gentle, fleeting wav'ring sprite,
> Friend and associate of this clay,
> To what unknown region borne
> Wilt thou now wing thy distant flight?
> No more with wonted humour gay,
> But pallid, cheerless, and forlorn.

Hadrian's best act was his choice of a successor, and that seems partly matter of chance. He had fixed on his unworthy favourite Verus, who soon died, leaving a son seven years old. The dying emperor made haste to choose an elderly senator named Antoninus, on condition that he adopted as his heirs the child L. Verus, along with a nephew of his own, also a Verus by birth, who thus at the age of seventeen took the name Marcus Aurelius Antoninus. Hadrian, playing on his paternal name, is said to have called young Marcus *Verissimus*, in recognition of a promising nature; but the choice of the other Verus, as a mere child, did no credit to his discrimination. The elder Antonine, from the first, showed such wisdom and benevolence that the Senate saluted him as Pius, an epithet by which he is justly known in history. Marcus Aurelius, made his son by marriage as well as by adoption, he presently associated with him as Cæsar; and these two ruled the empire for over forty years so as to make the Age of the Antonines the brightest stretch of its history. Gibbon declares that at no period had the civilized world been so well off as in this second century of our era, from the accession of Nerva to the death of Marcus Aurelius.

Antoninus Pius, gentle and prudent, came to power as the right man at the right time, when Rome appears happy in having no troubled history, nor is much known of his own life except its general reputation for virtue. The only thing recorded against him is that out of gratitude he insisted on having Hadrian's name beatified among the gods, a customary honour which the Senate was disposed to refuse on account of that emperor's unpopular measures and the exceptional severity of his last days; and indeed Hadrian's was no god-like nature. In a breathing space of peace, the first Antoninus, after the example of his predecessor, but staying quietly

Photo. Alinari



## TRAJAN'S TRIUMPHAL ARCH, BENEVENTUM

The magnificent Arch of Trajan, which dates from A.D. 114, has a considerable resemblance to the Arch of Titus at Rome. Trajan's Arch is constructed of Greek marble, and is 50 feet in height, the passage being 27 feet high. The Arch was erected by the Senate and People of Rome in honour of the Emperor, and in recognition of his having completed a new road to Brundisium. It is one of the finest and best-preserved Roman structures in Southern Italy. The reliefs with which it is decorated relate to incidents in Trajan's reign.

The Arch is now known as the *Porta Aurea* (The Golden Gate), and forms one of the gateways of the modern city of Benevento.

at home, could give himself to organizing the administration, reforming the laws, and setting before the Romans their proud past, its nine hundredth anniversary falling amid the mild glory of his reign. He would hardly have shone in wars, such as sprang up to vex the philosophic soul of Marcus Aurelius, who in the rules laid down for his own life thus describes his adoptive father's character as worthy to be taken for a model by which he warned himself "not to be too much of a Cæsar".

> Do everything like a disciple of Antoninus; imitate him in the vigour and constancy of his good conduct, in the equality, sweetness, and piety of his temper, the serenity of his aspect, the modesty and unpretendingness of his behaviour, and the generous ambition he had to be perfectly master of his business. Farther: it was his way to dismiss nothing till he had looked through it, and surveyed it on all sides; to bear unreasonable remonstrances without making a return; never to be in a hurry; to be backward in giving encouragement to informers. He was a great judge of men and manners, but of no satirical or reprimanding humour; not at all apt to be frightened or surprised; not too suspicious, nor in the least overrun with impertinence and conceit. Expense and figure was none of his fancy, as one might easily perceive by his palace, his furniture, his habit, his eating, and his attendance. Levity was his humour, and fatiguing his delight. . . . He was firm in his friendship, and steady and agreeable in the manner of showing it. He gave his courtiers all the freedom imaginable to contradict him, and was pleased with the proposal of a better expedient than his own. To conclude, he was a religious prince, but on this side superstition. Pray imitate these good qualities of his, that you may have the satisfaction of them at your last hour.
>
> —*Meditations* (Jeremy Collier's translation).

History offers at least no contradiction to this testimony, else we might suspect, as too highly coloured by gratitude, the praise of one whose weakest point seems an overstrained charity towards undeserving associates. Marcus Aurelius himself was of sterner temper and rarer gifts, that set him forth as one of the choice spirits of our world. Even the scandalmongering Dion Cassius has to own him for "the best emperor that ever was", and Julian's satirical review of his predecessors would make the gods vote for this as greatest of the Cæsars. He had been carefully educated by parents and teachers whose influence he gratefully commemorates at the opening of his famous *Meditations*; but his appears one of those souls that turn as if by instinct to the brightest light of life, while the case of his own son, Commodus, shows how the best precepts and example may be thrown away upon a churlish nature. When scarcely in his teens he had adopted the austere Stoic morality, seeking the highest good in virtue, and striving to despise the chances of fate or fortune. Yet there appears nothing of the hardness and haughtiness of Stoicism, nor of the angry fanaticism that is apt to alloy high motives, in one whose rule was "to cultivate truth and justice, and to live patiently among untrue and unjust men".

The Stoics stood against the more worldly Epicureans, adumbrating the modern schools of moral philosophy that take intuition and experience for their rival watchwords. Stoicism, with its lofty aspirations, had a strong attraction for the noblest minds of a decayed age, and for many proud and rich, "the Scribes and Pharisees" of Rome, who did not always act up to their professions, as in the case of Seneca, flatterer of Nero. But Lecky reminds us how this view of life has "left us no grander example than that of Epictetus, the sickly, deformed slave . . . who, while sounding the very abyss of human misery, and looking forward to death as to simple decomposition, was yet so filled with the sense of the Divine presence that his life was one continued hymn to Providence, and his writing and his example, which appeared to his contemporaries almost the ideal of human goodness, have not lost their consoling power through all the ages and the vicissitudes they have survived". The Stoics, with the Cynics as their fanatical extremists, were the Puritans of that ancient world. Uncheered, unless vaguely and fitfully, by the Christian hope of immortality, their life was often chastened by such considerations of its transitoriness and schooled by so strong a sense of duty as run through this imperial moralist's *Meditations*.

> Love the art, poor as it may be, which thou hast learned, and be content with it; and pass through the rest of life like one who has intrusted to the gods with his whole soul all that he has, making thyself neither the tyrant nor the slave of any man. Consider, for example, the times of Vespasian. Thou wilt see all these things, people marrying, bringing up children, sick, dying, warring, feasting, trafficking, cultivating the ground, flattering, obstinately arrogant, suspecting, plotting, wishing for some to die, grumbling about the present, loving, heaping up treasure, desiring consulship, kingly power. Well then, that life of these people no longer exists at all. Again, remove to the times of Trajan. Again, all is the same. Their life too is gone. In like manner view also the other epochs of time and of whole nations, and see how many after great efforts soon fell and were resolved into the elements.
>
> —Long's Translation.

It seems strange that Marcus Aurelius lent his countenance to the persecution of Christians, whom indeed he knew only as an obscure sect accused of mysterious immoralities by the vulgar and suspected by magistrates as a treasonable secret society. So thoughtful a prince might well have bestowed some attention on the "apologies" addressed to him by leaders of a church now growing into note and numbers, as appears in the legend of the "Thundering Legion". At the crisis of one of the emperor's battles, this legion, composed of Christian soldiers, was said by its prayers to have drawn from heaven a miraculous storm of hail, rain, and thunder that dismayed the enemy, while to the thirst-stricken Roman soldiers it supplied only a welcome relief. The whole story is evidently distorted out of a natural occurrence, yet the vic-

torious army must have contained some proportion of Christians, now that the soldiers of Rome were seldom Italians, but enlisted from warlike vassals among whom the new religion spread unheeded by statesmen and philosophers.

There is some hint of this emperor at one time protecting the Christians, on account, perhaps, of good military services. It was only here and there, by fits and starts of popular anger, that what the moral Tacitus labelled an "abominable superstition" was actively persecuted. At first readily confused with the Jews, as with other disseminators of Eastern cults that had long been growing up among the old Roman temples, the Christians soon marked themselves out by their horror of idolatry, forbidding them to take part in the public ceremonies prescribed by a state else so heedless of all more compliant superstitions. Pliny the Younger from his Asian government wrote to Trajan for instructions how to deal with those troublesome sectaries, against whom he has no charge to make but that they set a bad example in refusing to worship the gods. The emperor's reply was that the Christians need not be sought out, as is the literal sense of persecution, but that if brought before the judgment seat and proved obstinate in their nonconformity they must be put to death as enemies of the state. So also Marcus Aurelius let the law take its course, when other religions were tolerated that did not protest against the official worship.

The most signal persecution of his reign was in Gaul, where, towards the end of it, various calamities exasperated their fellow citizens to a mood of special bitterness against the defamed sect, whose atheism, as it seemed, was taken to have provoked the anger of the gods. Christianity was there in its infancy, having thriven faster under the suns of Africa and Asia, and among the international medley teeming at Rome. Almost the whole church of Lyons, with its aged bishop, was now thrown into prison to be questioned by tortures which forced only a few to deny their Lord, and some of these renegades overcame the weakness of the flesh so as afterwards to claim martyrdom as a boon. Most of the victims appear to have shown superhuman fortitude under unspeakable sufferings, the very description of which might sicken the reader. "I am a Christian," was all that could be wrung from them, their minds exalted over every extreme of anguish and execration. The heroine of the band was a puny slave girl named Blandina, who, bound naked to a stake, with her eyes fixed on heaven, hung exposed to wild beasts that, as if by a miracle, would not hurt her. After an interval of weeks she was again brought into the amphitheatre, side by side with a lad of fifteen, whom she encouraged to hold out to the end. After being forced to witness the long-drawn sufferings of other martyrs, that did not shake her constancy, cruelly scourged, burned on a red-hot chair, then fastened in a net to be gored and tossed by a bull, in her fervour of spirit the girl showed herself insensible to all the agonies, out of which she had at last to be put by a *coup de grâce*, amid the reluctant admiration of the crowd

that gloated on such inflictions. The burned bodies were thrown into the Rhone, as if to cheat the martyrs of their hoped-for resurrection.

The Christians of Lyons proving so firm, the imperial legate had respited them while he sent to Rome for special instructions. The answer of Marcus Aurelius was: release for the renegades, death for all who obstinately clung to their faith. Only once in his writings is he found mentioning the Christians, and that in casual allusion to their obstinate contempt of death, which he contrasts with the considerate courage of philosophy, always prepared to leave the body without concern. The slave-born Epictetus, whom this emperor quotes as a master in Stoical wisdom, took much the same view of the Christians. Had he but known it, the devout despot was misjudging those of his subjects best able to share his own self-communings. Had his eye ever fallen upon a Christian book of his century, the *Shepherd of Hermas*, which some fathers of the Church thought worthy to be received into the sacred canon, he might have found there maxims as unworldly as his own, and more directly turned upon considerations of practical righteousness. The example of Epictetus, too, should have warned him not to despise the humblest teachers of a wisdom often hid from the wise and prudent.

> I was born sickly, poor, and mean,
> A slave; no misery could screen
> The holders of the pearl of price
> From Cæsar's envy; therefore twice
> I fought with beasts, and three times saw
> My children suffer by his law.—*Browning.*

The new religion had a promise of eternal life to take the sting from the most cruel death. It appealed to depths in human nature unsounded by pagan devotion, at Rome apt to be superficial and mechanical, more concerned with ceremonies than with aspirations, as may be understood from its having for chief priests such worldly spirits as Julius and Augustus Cæsar. Whatever awe hung about the ancient temples must have been dissipated by the vulgarization of divinity in the persons of unworthy emperors elevated to godship by a decree of the Senate. The dignity of Jupiter and Minerva was also entrenched upon by foreign rivals. The Roman gods had long before been adapted to Greek conceptions; then they became mixed with new deities imported from the East. The worship of the Egyptian Isis, frowned on by Augustus in his politic conservatism, was encouraged by the eclectic piety of Marcus Aurelius. From Persia spread the cult of the sun god Mithra, which seems to have taken special hold on the soldiery, when respect for the old gods was at such a low ebb that one emperor melted down their statues to pay his troops. That mocker Lucian represents the Olympians as holding a meeting of protest against such intrusion of parvenu strangers, crowding their precinct with a mob of all nations and lan-

24

ANTONINUS PIUS

*British Museum*

Photos, Mansell

MARCUS AURELIUS

*British Museum*

guages, so that nectar and ambrosia would run short and the diverted sacrifices of mankind fail to go round the divine conclave.

Lucian was a contemporary whom we cannot fancy Marcus Aurelius reading with zest; nor does he appear to have spent any attention on the writings of the sect he gave over to persecution. But he himself was a martyr to duty, whose writings so display this true bent that, to use a Christian phrase fitting his character, the burden of active government must have been a cross to him bravely and patiently borne. He felt it a painful task to support the pomp and power which he despised as much as fame. Against the grain of his nature, he had to play the general as well as the statesman. The deathbed of peaceful Antoninus Pius had been darkened by clouds of war rising both on the north and on the east, and his successor was fain to spend much of his life in camps and marches on the disturbed frontiers, where, amid uncongenial surroundings, he wrote his famous diary of *Meditations*, through which his mind is better known to us than his actions, for an autobiography also written by him has perished.

His reign lacks a great historian, yet it is clear that he proved himself a good soldier, in spite of poor health, enfeebled probably by his early studies and austerities. Bodily weakness may have counselled him to take as active partner in empire the lustier Verus, his best quality a certain respect for the virtues of that senior colleague with whom he came to be unequally yoked. The average man, indeed, gives but perfunctory heed to such undeniable maxims as those which Marcus brought forth from his brooding mind; and a pleasure-loving prince may sometimes have yawned to hear what the square-toed Jeremy Collier could translate with relish. "Matter is in a perpetual flux. Change is always and everywhere at work; it strikes through causes and effects and leaves nothing fixed and permanent. And then how very near the two vast gulfs of time, the past and the future, stand together! Now, upon the whole, is not that man a blockhead that thinks these momentary things big enough either to make him proud or uneasy? Remember what an atom your person stands for in respect of the Universe, what a minute time comes to your share, and what a small concern you are in the empire of fate."

Young Verus was sent to the East against the chronically encroaching Parthians, now repressed by the prowess of his lieutenants rather than by his own ability. He came back to marry the daughter of Marcus, and both emperors celebrated a triumph they had hardly deserved by personal prowess. Before long they were called to the Danube, on which the Marcomanni, the Quadi, and other Germanic tribes defied the power of Rome. Verus soon died, leaving his philosophic colleague to carry on a war that lasted for years, but seemed coming to an end, when troubles broke out afresh in Sarmatia, a name vaguely spread over the modern Polish and Russian provinces beyond the lower Danube. The barbarians in this quarter had hardly been subdued when the emperor was called to Asia by rebellion in his own army. Avidius Cassius, the best of the generals who won victories

for Verus, now in command of Syria, had proclaimed himself emperor. This successful soldier may have been disgusted with what seemed his master's unpractical morality and patronage of idle talkers. One story is that he was deceived by a false report of Marcus Aurelius being dead. Another makes him egged on to usurpation by Faustina, the emperor's wife, who appears as presenting a scandalous contrast to his own life, her crimes either overlooked or seen with her husband's charitable eyes.[1] He was blind, also, to the faults of his young son, Commodus, whom soon afterwards, when hardly full grown, he adopted as colleague in the empire. Together they set out against Cassius, who was presently murdered by his own soldiers, sparing the empire a civil war. But another great calamity came to it from the East in this reign, a pestilence that worked havoc far and wide, like a shadow of the darkness gathering on that bright epoch's setting.

Marcus was detained in Asia and Egypt for more than a year, and when he got back to Rome he could not long enjoy the rest for which he must have sighed. The turbulence of the Danubian tribes had been only scotched, raising its head again so fiercely that the emperor had once more to lead his army into those wild regions. There, in A.D. 180, he welcomed the end of a life throughout which he had kept his eye fixed on death. It is supposed to have been near Vienna that this infirm man of threescore lay down to die, perhaps of the plague dogging his legions; but there were rumours of poison such as often floated round an emperor's deathbed. Faustina is suspected of suicide, when she passed away a few years earlier. Commodus succeeded his father without question, and at once showed his unworthiness by buying off the barbarian foes who had been almost subdued by the Roman arms.

It will be seen that in his reign of under twenty years Marcus Aurelius was little at leisure to pursue the moral purposes dearest to his heart; and the experiment desired by Plato had hardly a fair chance with a philosopher on such an uneasy throne. But as he could, in intervals of campaigning, as under the tutelage of his peaceful predecessor, he laboured to develop a new spirit of humanitarianism that throughout this century had been affecting the Roman government. Public charity was enlarged and organized with something of the same spirit as we see zealously at work in our own time. The laws grew milder, even slaves being taken under their protection, when the best minds put forth a consciousness that might is not right; and for the first time lawyers gave out men as born naturally free. The power of fathers over their children was also restricted. It was now that Roman law began to be systematized in the form afterwards stereotyped by the code of Justinian, which made the basis of legislation in most countries of modern Europe. The cruel punishments of old Rome came to be mitigated. It was

[1] It has indeed been surmised that this woman's name, a proverb for infamy as it became, was slandered by history, possibly to be in keeping with the character of her son. M. Renan, for one, has pointed out how untrustworthy are the stories told against her.

boasted of Antoninus Pius that he had not shed a drop of Roman blood; and though his successor firmly held the sword of justice, his character was a promise of mercy. Marcus Aurelius could not put down the brutalities of the amphitheatre, yet he braved public opinion by blunting their perils, and he showed what he thought of them by ostentatiously reading, writing, or giving audiences when bound to be present at the sports in his official character: the same scornful behaviour had been remarked in Julius Cæsar, and Julian, the would-be restorer of paganism, hated the circus "as a debtor hates the Forum".

That strict Stoic, who so little courted popularity, seems yet to have been loved by the people. It is less surprising that he rallied round him the true nobility, in which the love of Roman virtues had not been quenched by generations of arbitrary bloodshed. The whole state could not but be better for such a shining example at the head of a government so often debased by vice and folly. But it was too late to cure a general decay, in which even the stately speech of Rome grew corrupt. Hadrian had set a fashion of using Greek, as Frederick the Great affected French rather than his native tongue, and it was in Greek that Marcus Aurelius jotted down those famous thoughts by moving campfires on the Danube.

Such a saintly emperor had the defects of his qualities, among them a true classical want of humour. Lofty natures are apt to lack what we call humour, a useful gift as implying a sense of proportion which is one element of common sense. Rarely does this meditative soldier show any trace of such sense, unless as moved by the irony of fate. "Hippocrates, after curing many diseases, himself fell sick and died. The Chaldeans foretold the deaths of many, and then fate caught them too. Alexander and Pompey and Cæsar, after so often completely destroying whole cities, and in battle cutting to pieces many tens of thousands of cavalry and infantry, themselves too at last departed from life. Heraclitus, after so many speculations on the conflagration of the universe, was filled with water internally and died smeared all over with mud. And lice destroyed Democritus; and other lice killed Socrates." In the last sentence, for once, he is stirred out of his philosophic equanimity to a bitter jest.

One virtue of Marcus Aurelius overshot its mark to prove a serious fault in a ruler. He cultivated charity and trustfulness to the point of apparently shutting his eyes on the real character of those about him; indeed it seems questionable if this dogmatizer on human nature had much knowledge of men. The praise he lavishes on all who had to do with his education reads as if too generous to be discriminating. The philosophers he made so much of at his court would have been unlike other moralists if they all excelled in practice as well as precept. While professing to honour good men, he took the frivolous Verus as comrade of his labours. The notorious wickedness of his wife could not have been altogether hidden from him, yet he condoned it by beatifying the memory of one who appears to have been a fell

enemy of his ideals. His indulgence was most disastrously shown by his leaving to his son Commodus the power enhanced and dignified all through the century by the rule of picking out and training for it an efficient successor. Antoninus Pius had set him a better example by passing over his own sons in favour of this adopted worthy, to whose chamber he sent from his deathbed the golden statue of Fortune that passed as an emblem of dominion. No stain but that of over-fondness rests on the life of an emperor whose paternal house claimed descent from Numa, fabulous founder of Roman religion, and in whose reign the degenerating Romans saw a brief return of Numa's Golden Age, that was indeed but gilt by one man's virtue.

## CHAPTER IX

# Christianity and the Empire (A.D. 180–378)

DIOCLETIAN, A.D. 284–305. CONSTANTINE, A.D. 306–337
JULIAN THE APOSTATE, A.D. 361–363

The death of Marcus Aurelius is taken by some writers to mark the end of the ancient world. After him the Roman empire fell into confusion and rapid decline, with spasms of revival that only led to further catastrophes, till, after a century of troubled and doubtful annals, it took a new form, to seat itself in another capital, with changed surroundings, while Rome itself was left exposed to barbarian invaders.

Commodus, made emperor at the age of twenty, turned out a spoiled and vicious fool, who did his best to follow the footsteps of Nero. The work of the Antonines in purifying the state was undone by his tyranny of a dozen years. History has nothing to tell of him but despicable acts and qualities. His mania was for killing men and beasts with his own hand; instead of heading armies like his father, he aspired to show off his talents as a swordsman and an archer before the applauding mob, while the government lay in the hands of successive favourites, such as became at last provoked to murder him (A.D. 193). The Prætorians proclaimed one of his father's officers, Pertinax, whom they presently killed on finding him less bountiful than their expectations; then it is said that they put the empire up to auction, the highest bidder being an old senator, also murdered after a few months' reign.

The empire was now claimed by three provincial generals, among whom the African Septimius Severus, commanding on the Danube, had the advantage of being nearest to Rome. He marched into Italy (A.D. 193), mastered the city, slew his rivals in successive campaigns, fought with glory in the East, and at home kept the peace with a high hand till A.D. 211, when he died at York, having been called to Britain by disturbances that presently obliged the Romans to draw back their line of conquest in the north of the island. His sons and joint successors, Geta and Caracalla, were examples of the curse appearing to rest on the legitimate heirs of those emperors, who so seldom could leave their throne from father to son. Caracalla had his brother murdered, and a few years later was himself made away with by the usurper Macrinus, whom his enemies reviled as a gladiator of servile birth. Before long the purple was wrested from him by a Syrian youth, who, assuming the sacred name of Heliogabalus or Elagabalus, befouled it by notorious vice and folly, scandalizing what was left of Roman piety by an attempt to set the Baal and

Astarte of Syria above the old gods; and he is said to have been the first man who at Rome courted the charge of effeminacy by wearing silk. He was killed (A.D. 222), when the soldiery chose his cousin Alexander Severus, a virtuous young prince too soon (A.D. 235) assassinated in favour of the gigantic Thracian athlete Maximin. His brutal tyranny provoked a civil war in which he and his son were slain, as within a few months was the fate of four of the princes set up against them.

We need not load our memories with the names of all those rulers who waded in blood to a throne like to prove their own destruction. The humbled Senate was seldom consulted in the choice of its master. This fell into the hands of the soldiery, composed of recruits from the provinces, when the once proud name of Roman citizen had been gradually extended, till by Caracalla it was bestowed on all free subjects of the empire. Each army was ready to put forward as supreme the general who had gained its favour. At one time about a score of usurpers or pretenders started up in different parts of the Roman world; these, with their heirs loosely counted in, came to be styled the Thirty Tyrants. With real reluctance were some shortlived emperors dragged into rebellion. One of these usurpers *malgré lui* is reported as exclaiming: "You know not the misery of sovereign power; a sword is ever suspended over our head. We dread our very guards, we distrust our comrades. We have no longer the choice of activity or repose; nor can age, character, nor conduct shield us against envious calumny. In raising me to the throne you doom me to a life of care and a speedy death."

The central power being thus torn and shaken, the outer defences of the empire could not stand firm against enemies pressing upon it from different sides. It had taken all the strength of Marcus Aurelius to hold back barbarian warriors swarming from the north. In the third century appeared upon the Rhine two fresh hosts of Franks and Alemans, destined to give their names to the chief modern powers of the Continent. The Franks overran both Gaul and Spain, and even invaded Africa. German horsemen cut their way on to the soil of Italy, and Saxon pirates began to harry the coasts of Gaul and Britain. The empire was already threatened also by the apparently kindred stocks of Goths and Vandals, who now first come into historic ken, pushing out from their original seats on the Baltic. A battle with them on the Danube cost the life of the Roman emperor Decius; then across the Euxine the Goths overflowed into Asia and Greece, where they sacked Athens. In the East those inveterate foes, the Parthians, had given way to a recrudescence of Persian vigour under a new Artaxerxes, who demanded back from Rome the whole of its Asian conquests. Sapor, the second hero of this dynasty, made captive (A.D. 260) the emperor Valerian, whom he is said to have scornfully used as a footstool while living, and after his death to have kept his skin stuffed with straw for a trophy.

In the second half of the century a long course of disasters was

THE ROMAN EMPIRE
at its greatest extent
2ND CENTURY A.D.
English Miles
100 0 200 400
Note The provinces East of the Euphrates Armenia etc., conquered by Trajan, were abandoned by his successor Hadrian
MARE GERMANICUM (NORTH SEA)
Scandia
M. SUEVICUM (BALTIC SEA)
SARMATIA
SCYTHIA
BRITANNIA
GERMANIA
Vandali
Gothini
Marcomanni
Carpatus Mts
Carpi
GALLIA
Lugdunensis
Aquitanica
Narbonensis
VINDELICIA
NORICUM
RAETIA
PANNONIA
DACIA
Pevce
Napoca
Sarmatia
Tyras R. (Dniester)
Olbia
Roxolani
Tanais R. (Don)
Palus Maeotis
Sea of Azof
Caucasus Mons
Albania
Iberia
Colchis
Cyrus R.
MARE CASPIUM (CASPIAN SEA)
OCEANUS ATLANTICUS
Mare Cantabricum (Bay of Biscay)
HISPANIA
Tarraconensis
Lusitania
Baetica
Gallaecia
Asturica
Vaccaei
Vettones
Celtiberi
Lusitani
Iberi
Iberum
Pyrenaeus Mons
Corsica
Sardinia
Baleares
MARE TYRRHENUM
Mare Adriaticum
ILLYRICUM
MOESIA
PONTUS EUXINUS (BLACK SEA)
Sinope
Amisus
Trapezus
THRACIA
MACEDONIA
Philippi
Byzantium
BITHYNIA
PONTUS
ARMENIA
Mysia
ASIA
Lydia
Phrygia
Caria
CAPPADOCIA
CILICIA
Tarsus
Issus
MESOPOTAMIA
Edessa
Nicephorium
Euphrates R.
Zagros Mts
Susa
BABYLONIA
Seleucia
Ctesiphon
MEDIA
Ecbatana
Zygris
Tigris R.
Tigranocerta
Artaxata
Thermodon R.
Iris R.
Halys R.
Colchis
Ionium Mare
MARE INTERNUM (MEDITERRANEAN SEA)
Creta
CYPRUS
Salamis
Paphos
Sidon
Tyrus
Palmyra
Damascus
Syrian Desert
Saraceni
Judaea
Jerusalem
Jericho
Jordan R.
Joppa
Hierosolyma
Petra
ARABIA
Arabia Petraea
Sinus Arabicus
Rhodus
Patara
Myra
Attalia
Perga
Side
Antiochia
Apamea
Seleucia
Laodicea
Sicilia
Syracuse
Messana
Rhegium
Lilybaeum
Africa
Mauritania Tingitana
Mauritania Caesariensis
Numidia
Gaetulia
Carthago Nova
Saldae
Tingis
Sala
Cirta
Hippo
Hadrumetum
Thapsus
Syrtis Minor
Oea
Leptis
Ptolemais
Berenice
Cyrene
CYRENAICA
Marmarica
Syrtis Major
Alexandria
Aegyptus
Memphis
Clysma
Pelusium
Augila
Ammonium
Cydamus
Garama
Desert
AETHIOPIA
Potolemais
Latopolis
Syene
Berenice
Tropic of Cancer
Longitude East 20 of Greenwich
John Bartholomew & Co. Edinr.

checked by the martial prowess of Aurelius Claudius, Aurelian, and Probus, all Illyrian peasants by birth, who in their short reigns won signal victories in the north; and Aurelian pushed his arms eastward as far as Palmyra, to overthrow the heroic widow Zenobia, who claimed the empire of the East in right of her husband's victories over the Persians. Then, not to mention some intervening emperors of less account, in A.D. 284 the choice of a council of officers fell upon Diocletian, who by the conquest of Armenia and Mesopotamia kept Persia from troubling Rome for half a century.

Diocletian, a Dalmatian of the humblest origin, proved a ruler able to give the empire a new lease of life. Now it may rightly be called an empire, its princes no longer making pretence to be servants of a republic, or colleagues of the Senate with which Augustus divided his power, and which Marcus Aurelius had still treated with scrupulous respect. Rome ceased to be the centre of its nominal dominion. Diocletian visited it only once, fixing his capital at Nicomedia on an Asian gulf of the Sea of Marmora, a place already known in history for the death of Hannibal. Here, among stately structures springing up to rival Rome, he assumed the style of an Eastern despot, crowned by such a diadem as Julius Cæsar durst not grasp, keeping himself in royal seclusion to be approached only with signs of obeisance to which no old Roman would have stooped. But it was not idle pride that invested him with this imposing pomp; nor would he engross a power which no one man could wield. He reorganized the empire, at this time containing over some hundred million souls, into nearly a hundred provinces, divided among four governments. Retaining for himself the sovereignty of the East, he raised his lieutenant Maximian to equal dignity as emperor of the West, with his seat at Milan. To these two Augusti were adjoined, as Cæsars, Galerius, an ex-herdboy, risen to military distinction, and Constantius, each of whom became the son-in-law of his senior, and was looked on as his heir. Galerius, after prowess in the East, was appointed as guardian of the Danubian region and Greece; Constantius had charge of Gaul and Britain, the latter recovered from the usurper Carausius, who had maintained himself there for several years. Among these creatures of his politic will Diocletian held a primacy of respect, or of such force of character as might keep all four princes working smoothly together. He ruled prosperously and gloriously for a score of years, then (A.D. 305) amazed the world by solemnly abdicating his throne and retiring to his native country on the Adriatic, where he spent his last few years in the luxurious tranquillity of a palace that christened the city of Spalato.

The worst charge upon Diocletian's reign was his persecution of the Christians; and the worst has been made of it by Christian reporters, who, under another ruler's patronage, would soon be fully licensed to colour history through their resentment. In spite of repeated outbreaks of popular ill will, prompting or prompted by official severity, Christianity had been growing fast, especially in the

eastern half of the empire, not as yet embodied in any formal creed or canon of scripture, but already shedding off the various orthodoxies and heresies that would rage against each other as hotly as did the fires of pagan persecution. The number of converts cannot with certainty be estimated; at the opening of the third century they may have been as many as one in ten of the civilized world, while in some parts of Asia they formed a still more considerable minority, now spread through all classes. Diocletian's wife and daughter were Christians, so were many of his officers and officials; and a Christian church had been conspicuously built in view of his palace, when forty churches could be counted in Rome. Yet towards the end of his reign, instigated apparently by his fierce subaltern Galerius, he set on foot a general attempt to stamp out this uncompliant faith. His family being forced to recant, the church at Nicomedia was destroyed, and the Christians were deprived of their rights as citizens. A fire twice breaking out in his palace seems to have been blamed on them; or it may have been the mere obduracy of the banned sect that exasperated Diocletian to greater severity, when by edict he gave it over to the utmost rigours of the law through the Roman world.

In his own quarter this edict was harshly carried out, and his colleague Maximian, brutal soldier as he was, needed no spurring to cruelty; but Constantius in his government showed himself an unwilling persecutor. Many, perhaps most, of the Roman magistrates, less cruel as a rule than superstitious mobs, shrank from what they took as a disagreeable duty, doing their best to persuade the Christians to any show of compliance, but often foiled or provoked by the enthusiasm with which not a few courted the martyrdom hailed almost as a sacrament of their faith, or a title to honour in the heaven where some of them looked forward to gloating over the eternal tortures of their tyrants. The punishments inflicted upon them were now indeed not so atrocious as in early days. Beheading was a more merciful form of execution, and many came off with mutilation or with being condemned to labour in mines. At this time the persecution seems to have raged most fiercely in Palestine, where the number of martyrs is stated as under a hundred, from which Gibbon calculates that over the whole Roman empire the victims of paganism must have been far fewer than were to be those of the Inquisition. This historian's unsympathetic account of the Church's agonies should not drive us to blind faith in the excited stories of ecclesiastical chroniclers who had such sore temptation to exaggerate successive persecutions.

While the Church was being watered by blood and tears, the old temples were crumbling to decay, or kept up less by devotion than as offices of statecraft. Philosophy had become the religion of the educated, with whom graven idols melted into gaseous speculation that came to be tinged by a new glow of sentiment. Such a devout spirit as Marcus Aurelius might still strive to identify the official gods with his idea of the godlike, but to the mass of Stoics and Epicureans Plato and Zeno were more real than Jupiter and Mercury. In his

reign Lucian, without rebuke, had raised satirical laughter at the expense of those outworn divinities. Idle and luxurious citizens still cherished a good deal of miscellaneous credulity, such as may be seen springing up among the chinks of our own faith; magic, witchcraft, and attention to dreams throve like weeds in a decadent society; and among voluptuaries who had lost physical as well as moral health there appears to have come to the front the cult of such a practical god as Æsculapius, personifying the quack medicines and "treatments" of our day. But vague religiosity turned rather to Eastern mysticism; while moral aspirations found themselves most at home in the faith that preached a kingdom of heaven far above that cloudy realm of Jove. The very evils of the imperial world, directing men's minds to a future state, paved the way for Christianity. A new spirit was in the air, strongest among the cosmopolitan crowds of cities like Rome and Constantinople. The name "pagan" hints how worship of the gods lingered longest among *pagani*, ignorant villagers, and with them it would be less directed to the stately shapes of Olympus than to the stocks and stones of older superstition, never banished by the Pantheon of poets and artists. Amid such a confusion of decaying cults, the faith that for some time had tended to form a secret power within the empire would soon find itself "drawn from the catacombs to be placed on the throne of the Cæsars".

At the court of Diocletian, or serving in his army, grew up Constantine, son of the Cæsar Constantius, and perhaps kept in Asia as a pledge of his father's fidelity. His mother, Helena, was born or became a Christian, who would signalize her zeal by the "invention" of the cross at Jerusalem. The tradition is now slighted that makes her a British princess, and she seems rather to have been humbly born in one of those eastern provinces that had become the seat of the empire. Her son, whom Christian writers did not fail to extol as handsome, prudent, and brave, would be about thirty at the date of Diocletian's abdication, when as yet he showed no religious zeal on one side or other.

It was part of Diocletian's plan that his colleague Maximian should resign the purple along with himself, as the latter was induced to do unwillingly; then Galerius and Constantius became senior emperors, two other officers of the same Illyrian stock, Severus and Maximin Daza, nephew of Galerius, being promoted to be Cæsars. Constantine, thus passed over, the masterful Galerius would have kept beside him; but the young man made off, apparently on the sly, hurrying across Europe to join his father, whom he found at Boulogne in a bad state of health: his by-name, *Chlorus*, "the pale", suggests that he was never robust. Father and son crossed over to Britain, where next year (306 A.D.), Constantius died at York; then his soldiers proclaimed Constantine emperor.

This return to nomination by a distant army could not please Galerius, yet for the sake of peace he recognized Constantine, not indeed as Augustus, the title he had taken from his father, but as

Cæsar, Severus being promoted to the superior dignity. Then other candidates for empire came into the field. The Romans were naturally discontented with a system which neglected their time-honoured supremacy, and, when Galerius ordered the Prætorian guard of Rome to be disbanded, those arrogant troops proclaimed Maxentius, son of Maximian, who had lately abdicated at Milan, but was so ill satisfied with private life that he readily came forward to be the colleague of his son. So now there were six titular emperors in the Roman world, soon to be engaged in a confused struggle of ambition, which seems harder to disentangle for similarity of names among the rivals.

At first Constantine kept himself to his own quarter, where he had work to do in holding back the assailants of Gaul from the north, and where his capital, Trier, is still distinguished by monuments of Roman dominion. Severus, abandoned by his army, was captured and killed by Maximian and Maxentius. Galerius invaded Italy, but saw well to retreat, fearing to be attacked by Constantine, who had married the daughter of Maximian. That restored ex-emperor and his son, a worthless pair, presently fell out, and the father was driven into exile. Galerius called a council of emperors, to which Diocletian was invited, and they appointed Licinius, friend and comrade of Galerius, to be full Augustus, without passing through the intermediate rank of Cæsar. This disappointed Maximin Daza, who also assumed the title of Augustus. So the elaborate system of Diocletian was already going to pieces.

Maxentius, banned on all sides, made himself hateful at Rome by his tyranny. He was so foolish as to quarrel with Constantine, who had given refuge to his father Maximian, treating him with consideration as his own father-in-law. Maximian showed himself so little grateful that, when Constantine was absent on an expedition against the Franks, this restless old man for the third time proclaimed himself emperor. Constantine hurried back to attack the pretender, who had shut himself in Marseilles, where he was taken, and soon died an obscurely violent death. One story is that, being forgiven by Constantine, he tempted his daughter to connive at the murder of her husband, but by her was betrayed to just vengeance. About the same time Galerius died (A.D. 311) of a painful disease which Christian writers took for a judgment on the persecutor of their faith. But even before his death he had grown weary of a persecution that only inspired its victims to fresh zeal.

As successor Galerius nominated his protégé Licinius, whereupon Maximin Daza, who claimed the senior place among the Augusti, took possession of Asia, Licinius being engaged on the Danube. For the moment those two competitors came to terms, while Constantine, waiting his time to make himself supreme, formed politic alliance with Licinius, whose hands seem to have been full in keeping barbarians out of the Danubian provinces that were then the empire's weakest point. Constantine had so far quelled the Franks and other foes on his frontier that, with the well-exercised army of Gaul, he could now march against

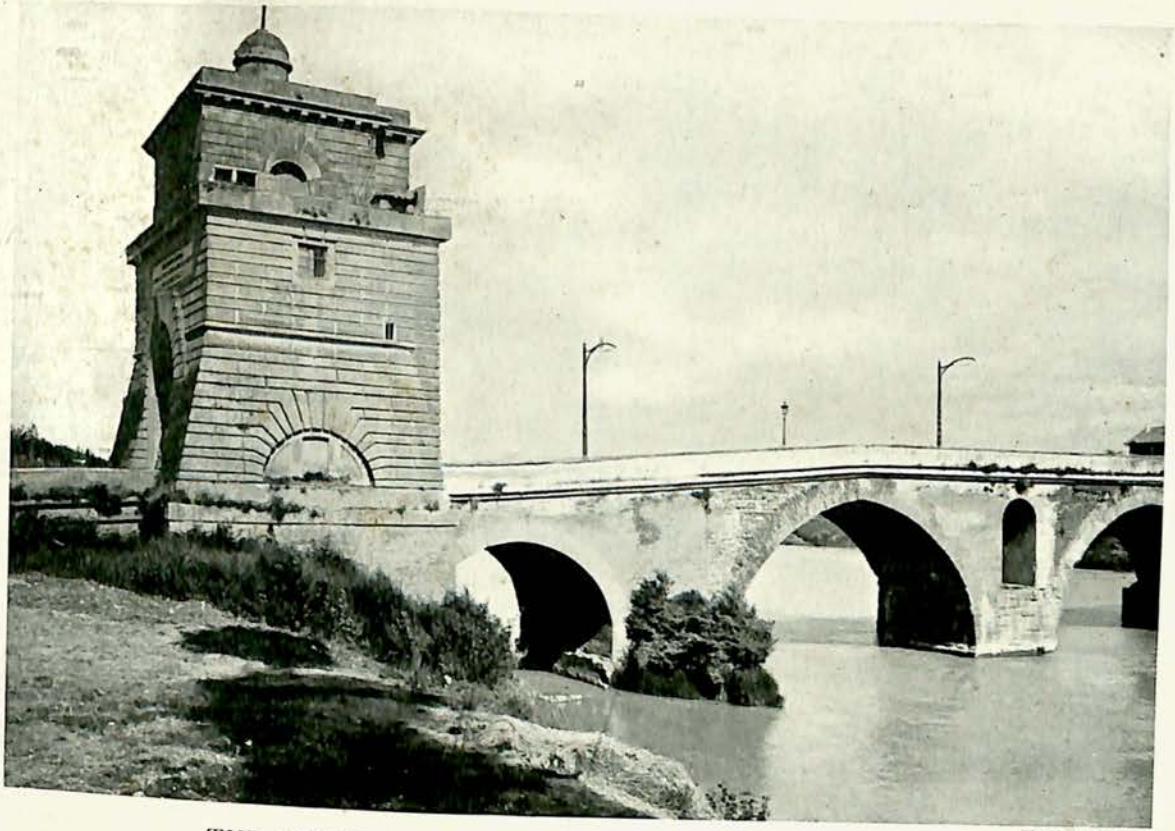


Photo. Alinari

THE PONTE MOLLE, ACROSS THE TIBER, NEAR ROME

Constructed on the foundations of the ancient Pons Milvius, the scene of Constantine's great victory.

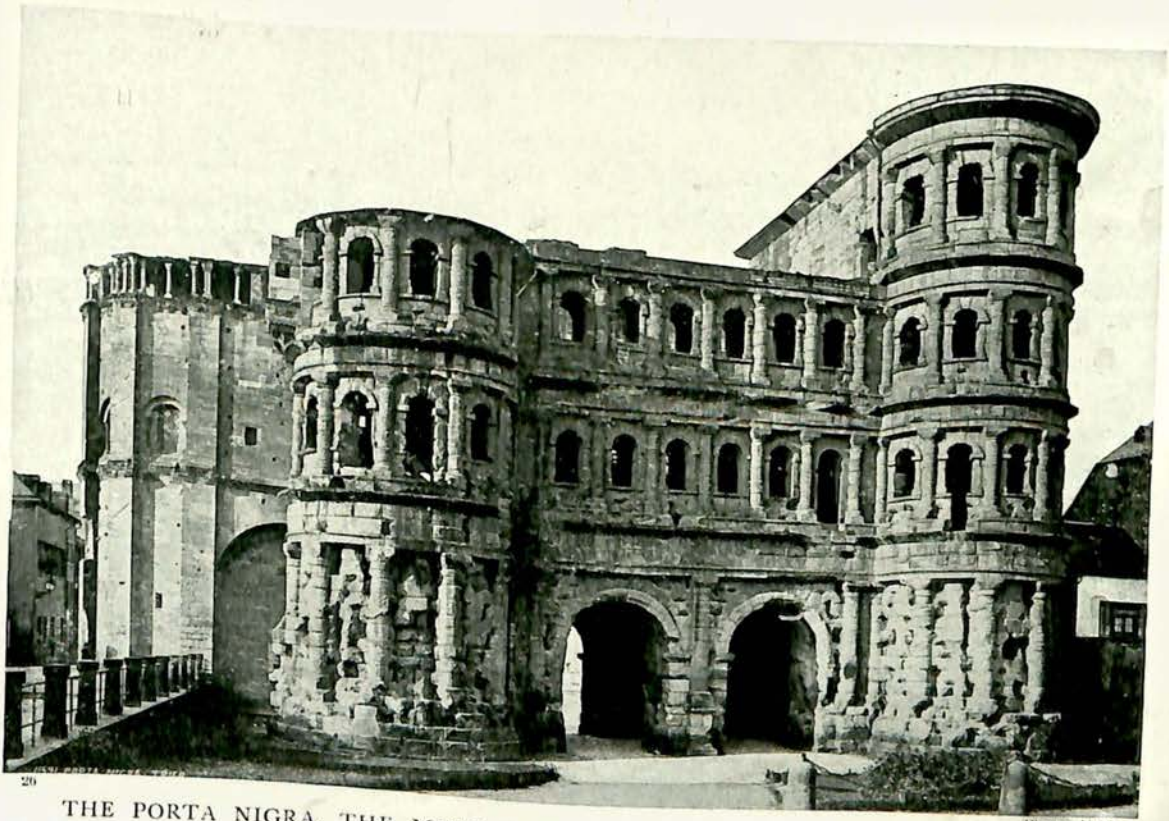


Photo. Frith

THE PORTA NIGRA, THE MOST REMARKABLE ROMAN BUILDING IN TRIER

Trier (Trèves) was a frequent residence of Constantine and other Roman Emperors.

Maxentius at Rome. This tyrant was no soldier, but when his generals had been beaten in the north of Italy, in shame or despair he came out to meet the invader a few miles from Rome, at the Milvian Bridge of the Tiber (A.D. 312). Constantine's army, inferior in numbers but superior in spirit and discipline, drove its opponents into the flooded river, the bridge being choked with fugitives, and in the slaughterous rout Maxentius was drowned. His head, carried on a spear, gained a triumphal welcome for the victor from a city too well used to greeting new masters.

Entering Rome as a deliverer, Constantine won its good opinion by his first acts. He killed off the family of Maxentius, but made haste to proclaim an amnesty and to redress the wrongs of the past few years. He finally disbanded the arrogant Prætorian guards through whom the tyrant had dominated Rome; their fortified camp was dismantled, and the men were divided among armies serving in the field. The Senate he treated with considerate respect, and in return that obsolescent body voted him grateful honours, among them the arch of which a model is familiar to us beside Hyde Park. It seems to mark the degeneration of Roman art that this monument of triumph was decorated with sculptures stripped from the arch erected to celebrate the victories of Trajan.

The laudatory inscription on the arch of Constantine contains one suggestive phrase, *instinctu divinitatis*, that in the mouth of Roman senators may have been a mere formal compliment, but was soon to be taken as a pregnant text by church historians more grateful than critical. It was at a battle of this campaign that Constantine is said to have seen in the sky a flaming cross beside the Greek words interpreted *In this, victory.* Another version of the story is his being bidden in a dream to consecrate the shields of his soldiers by the sign of the cross. The Christian writers are not consistent in their accounts of this miracle, while a pagan authority so far bears them out as to speak of armies seen shining in heaven above the march of Constantine. All ancient history is full of such portentous prodigies as were noted in Rome before and after Cæsar's death: after any remarkable event it would seldom be difficult to recall signs that might be adapted as predictions. We must dismiss the vision of Constantine as possibly a distorted account of some natural phenomenon that may have impressed his mind, but what seems clear is that now began his gradual conversion to Christianity, which should have been more suddenly overwhelming had heaven enlightened him according to the legend.

The one good thing told of Maxentius is that he showed some favour to the persecuted Christians, and it may well be that at Rome Constantine found a more tolerant spirit than reigned at the court of Galerius. His own father Constantius had been backward in persecuting, and his mother was or became a Christian. He himself was little of a pious turn of mind, but willing rather to take a practical view of religion; and consistent with his character is an account which makes him bethink himself how so many emperors, for all their worship

of the old gods, had yet come to misfortune. This consideration might well set him upon the choice of some divinity more efficient as a protector; then such a one appeared to his enquiring mind in the god of the Christians, whose virtuous life and contempt of death seemed inspired by a power well worth having on his side. He had hitherto evinced a far from Christian spirit, when at Trier he revived the worst brutalities of the theatre by giving crowds of captives to be torn by wild beasts in holiday spectacles.

The first sign of this nebulous conversion, which to the end remained poorly illuminated by Christian graces, was the famous edict of Milan (A.D. 313). Here Constantine met Licinius, who now married his sister, according to the usual policy of connecting those imperial partners by family affection. Licinius had no good will towards the Christians, but he concurred with his colleague in proclaiming full religious toleration to them and all other worshippers throughout the empire, so that "whatever gods be in heaven may be placated and propitious to us and our subjects". The Christians are specially mentioned, having been marked out for persecution by the old law; but Constantine's politic eclecticism did not yet commit him to full recognition of Christianity as the one true faith, rather as the best policy for standing well with heavenly powers. Presently, however, he is found speaking of himself as a believer, in letters that, by threatening penalties against the African sect of Donatists, show his idea of toleration to be incomplete.

Diocletian, who died the same year at Spalato, had been invited to this meeting of emperors, but he is reported as preferring the cultivation of fine cabbages to meddling with the cares of state he had laid aside. But that Maximin Daza had to be reckoned with was shown by his now crossing the Bosphorus at the head of an army. Licinius marched against him, and won a signal victory, which also a credulous chronicler attributes to heavenly interposition. Flying back across Asia, Maximin took his life in despair when deserted by his troops and followed up by the conqueror. Licinius now showed pagan brutality in butchering not only the family of his defeated rival, but the wife and daughter of Diocletian, who had been kept captive by Maximin, in spite of the ex-emperor's entreaties. Maximin having been a fiercely zealous persecutor of the Christians, one of his last acts was to revoke the decrees against them, as if the tyrant recognized that he had put his trust in the wrong quarter.

Constantine and Licinius now stood alone, masters respectively in the west and the east. A collision between them was only matter of time, and in A.D. 316 they went to war. After more than one defeat, Licinius made temporary peace by giving up all Europe except Thrace to Constantine, who thereby took on himself the onerous charge of defending the Danube. Licinius renewed in Asia the persecution of Christians, so we need not believe all their writers' praise of Constantine as a welcome deliverer. The two emperors were soon at odds again; then (A.D. 323) Constantine won a great battle near Adrianople, and went

on to take Byzantium. Licinius saw nothing for it but to throw himself on the mercy of his brother-in-law, who for his sister's sake spared her suppliant husband, soon, however, to find some violent death.

Constantine, now supreme, set himself to continue Diocletian's work in remodelling the Roman empire. His patronage of Christianity brought upon him a new charge, for, however unsettled was his own faith, he undertook to be head of Church as well as State, lecturing and threatening heretics before this still unbaptized emperor was sure of orthodoxy. Free from sufferings and disabilities, the Christian body showed itself to be rent by dissensions that grew more violent, or at least more manifest, when it had no longer to face a common enemy. The various sects, whose mutual recriminations might have given some colour to pagan calumnies against their faith, make no subject for these pages. At this time the most clamant controversy, started at Alexandria, intellectual centre of the Church, was between the followers of Arius and Athanasius, the former lowering the position of Christ as a created being, while the latter held that view of the Trinity expressed in the creed familiar to us under his name. Constantine proposed to settle the question by calling the first general council of bishops (A.D. 325) at the old Bithynian city of Nicæa, where, under his presidency, the zealous eloquence of Athanasius won a majority for the doctrine stated in the Nicene Creed, now added to the older and simpler Apostles' Creed. But the majority was so doubtful, and the minority so resolute, that for centuries this controversy continued to disturb the Church. Presently the Arians won Constantine to their side, and Athanasius was deposed from the archbishopric of Alexandria and exiled, as happened to him repeatedly in the course of his troubled life.

Constantine's true character is obscured by the opposite views taken of it by pagan and Christian writers, and by controversialists among the Christians. On the whole it looks as if a lukewarm conversion had not been profitable for righteousness. The oppression charged against his later reign seems based mainly on the exactions he made from the Roman world to build and adorn a city that remains his monument. In his war with Licinius he had observed the advantages of Byzantium, that old Greek colony on the strait where Darius had thrown his bridge between Europe and Asia. This site he chose for the new capital of what was indeed a new empire.

In A.D. 326 he begun the construction of a city which he proposed to call New Rome, but it soon became better known as "the city of Constantine". Spread over a projecting point beside a haven inlet of the Bosphorus, Constantinople, like Rome, stood upon seven hills, looking across a narrow strait to heights displaying its Asian suburb. As Byzantium it had long been a notable place, which Constantine now rebuilt on a huge scale, hastening the work so that it could be called complete in four years. The army of architects, artificers, and labourers he collected must have made up a large nucleus of population, but to fill his capital becomingly he sought to tempt the aristocracy of Rome,

while by regular distribution of corn, wine, oil, and money he brought together an idle mob such as at Rome had been demoralized through the same means. To ornament it he robbed not only Rome but Greece, and all the world, of statues, monuments, and choice works of art, some preserved long enough to be stolen in turn by modern conquerors. Two columns, one from Delphi that had there for centuries commemorated the Persian defeat at Platæa, and an obelisk twice as old from Egypt, still stand on the area of the Hippodrome, that rivalled the Colosseum of Rome, with space for nearly a hundred thousand spectators. Beside the Hippodrome was the Augustæum, an open space paved with marble and dotted with the same artistic spoils, around a pillar from which should be measured the distances to all parts of the empire, as hitherto from a column in the centre of the Roman Forum. For himself and his court the emperor reared a whole group of palaces; and among the other structures that sprang up at his command were several Christian churches, one designed to be the burial place of his dynasty. At Jerusalem, also, he caused to be built a stately church over what was taken for the site of the Holy Sepulchre. He showed, indeed, a most edifying zeal for erecting churches in other parts of the world, which helped to swell the burden of his extravagance pressing upon Christian and pagan subjects alike.

But in this sumptuous home he could not keep peaceful state. No sooner was it finished than he had to take the field against the Goths and Sarmatians, again pressing upon the north-eastern bounds of civilized Europe. Two years' fighting quieted them for the moment; then the emperor was troubled by fresh quarrels and intrigues of Arians and Athanasians, which he vainly would have settled by authority in a way that shows how little he understood the Christian spirit. His enlightenment as to its letter is not illustrated by the fact that, somehow or other, he was brought round in turn to favour Arius, whose sudden death at the very moment of victory filled his partisans with consternation and his adversaries with triumph. It has been supposed that, like other men of action, in religious matters Constantine was much under the influence of his wife and sister, and that they were on the side of Arius. All we know for certain is that when the first Christian emperor lay down to die in A.D. 337, it was at the hands of an Arian bishop that he let himself be baptized for the first time.

So ended Constantine, styled the Great, a man of such mixed character and of such puzzlingly inconsistent conduct that he cannot be called good, while perhaps better than he was painted by some biased writers, if not deserving all the praises of others. A celebrated estimate of his reign described him as an excellent prince in its first period, a robber in the second, and a spendthrift in the third: he would not be the first or the last autocrat to fall away from his early promise. How far he was ever a Christian at heart seems doubtful; and his open professions of faith are marred by his putting off the decisive rite of baptism to what looks like a deathbed conviction. An apology for this delay has been found in his fearing to scandalize the pagan majority

Photo. Anderson

CONSTANTINE THE GREAT

*Colossal statue in the Church of St. John Lateran, Rome*

of his subjects, of whose religion he was still officially Chief Pontiff, as well as lord of the Christian Church. Perhaps, like other owners of great possessions, he hesitated between the claims of this world and of the next, by fits and starts moved to a genuine devotion, soon clouded by the incense of flattering courtiers. Certainly he cannot be accepted in the saintly character given him by theologians grateful for past and expected favours. Julian's account of him is to be suspected of an opposite prejudice, but, at a time when many were alive to contradict a false estimate, this imperial author represented the love of pleasure as Constantine's chief characteristic.

One dark crime stained his record, which, indeed, he is said to have bitterly repented. As he was preparing to leave Rome for Constantinople, his eldest son, Crispus, was put to death by his orders, as was also his young nephew, Licinius, a matter left mysterious in accounts of historians who would not or could not tell the truth. The emperor is said to have been jealously suspicious of the popularity won by his son's manners and martial exploits. Crispus was born of an early obscure marriage, and it has been also supposed that the second wife, Fausta, daughter of Maximian, here played the proverbial stepmother in clearing a way for her own children—a more scandalous story gives her and her stepson the parts of Phædra and Hippolytus. The same guilt makes a frequent motive in Eastern tales, as in the once popular romance of *The Seven Wise Masters*; and its familiarity may have bred the suspicion in this case. Whatever were her share in this tragedy, Fausta herself presently fell a victim to her husband's displeasure, as if too late he had discovered himself misled by her. It is a further surmise that she and his mother, Helena, exercised rival influences at Constantine's court, where his sister, Constantia, had also his ear, and that the emperor's theological inconsistency may have been prompted by zealous discipleship among the ladies of his household, each perhaps acting as mouthpiece for some favourite bishop.

By Fausta Constantine left three sons and three daughters. Among these Cæsars—Constantine, Constantius, and Constans—even before his death, he had partitioned the empire, while they were still too young to be trusted with power; and he also assigned dominions to his nephews, Dalmatius and Hannibalianus. Again a similarity of names confuses the struggle that did not fail to break up this arrangement. Constantius, being on the spot, took his father's place, after a massacre of royal kinsmen such as was to be a familiar incident in the history of Constantinople. Constantine II, to whom fell Gaul and Spain, attacked his brother Constans, ruler of Africa and Italy, but was killed; then Constans and Constantius agreed to divide the world as rulers of the West and East, till Constans was murdered by the usurper Magnentius. This brought his surviving brother to the West, under whom, at the death of Magnentius, the empire was again reunited (A.D. 353), more than one minor usurpation having been cleared away.

Constantius, whose lot fell in such troubled times, was a weak and

vain prince, much in the hands of eunuchs, who now began to figure in the semi-oriental state of Constantinople. He made a poor soldier, his taste being rather for theological controversy, in which he came forward as champion of the Arians and persecutor of their opponents. Yet he had to take arms against several usurpers on the one side, while on the other his empire was attacked by the Persian king, Sapor. As colleague in uncongenial cares he first chose Gallus, son of one of Constantine's brothers, who, saved from that massacre along with his younger brother, Julian, had been brought up out of the way in Asia. Gallus was made Cæsar, with his capital at Antioch, and the Persian frontier as his charge. But he turned out so cruel a ruler and so insolent a viceroy that the emperor had him put to death. Julian was then brought prisoner to his cousin's court at Milan, where for months he expected no better fate. Luckily, however, he gained the goodwill of the empress, Eusebia, who shared with his favourite eunuchs the control of her husband's mind, and she persuaded Constantius to take the young man into favour. After being sent to Athens for a few months, Julian was recalled to be invested as Cæsar, with the government of the Transalpine province, that had been for a time abandoned to ravaging barbarians.

At the age of twenty-five the new Cæsar found himself thus taken from his favourite pursuits, to prove, like Marcus Aurelius, that a student may make a good soldier. He drove the intruders out of Gaul and restored its cities, among which he chose Paris as his headquarters. His exploits presently excited the jealousy of Constantius, who was for stripping him of his troops to employ them on the Persian war, where the emperor had earned no such laurels. Julian declared himself ready to obey, but his indignant army replied by proclaiming him emperor at Paris, and, with real or affected reluctance, he accepted their choice. He seems to have done his best to come to some accommodation with Constantius, but, on the latter denouncing him as a traitor, had to advance for a collision, averted by the old emperor's death, when Julian was universally acknowledged.

His surname of the Apostate, bestowed by theological resentment, must not blind us to the fact that Julian in his short reign bid fair to be far from the worst of Roman emperors, might even have proved a coarse-grained Marcus Aurelius, with a dash of self-consciousness and affectation, also a vein of humour, manifest in his *Banquet of the Cæsars*, a satire in the style of Lucian, that deals very critically both with the character of his predecessors and with the divinity of Olympus. Brought up strictly as a Christian, under teachers perhaps of unchristian spirit, his heart had reverted to the old religion, conceived by him as a curious mixture of philosophy, morality, and superstition, which he embraced with such earnestness as to deserve the name of a pagan puritan, whose watchword was duty and his choice an austerely simple life, pushed even to ludicrous extremes. He could hardly be expected to recognize the beauties of a faith whose professors had massacred their kinsmen and his own. As colleague of Constantius he had to

JULIAN THE APOSTATE PRESIDING AT A CONFERENCE OF SECTARIANS. From the painting by E. Armitage, R.A., in the Walker Art Gallery, Liverpool.

This picture shows Julian, the Roman Emperor who vainly tried to undo the Christian triumph under Constantine the Great, with his Pagan courtiers listening to the eager controversy of the Christians on fine points of theology. The Pagan Emperor wears a smile of amused contempt.

The artist, Edward Armitage (1817–96), was distinguished as a historical and fresco painter. This picture was first exhibited in 1874, and is here reproduced by permission of the Corporation of Liverpool.

JULIAN THE APOSTATE PRESIDING AT A CONFERENCE

E. ARMITAGE, R.A.

dissemble his real opinions, but he marched upon Constantinople in the name of the ancient gods, and, once seated in absolute power, made it clear that Christianity was no longer in favour.

He proclaimed, indeed, general toleration; he interfered against the persecution of Athanasians; he spoke of rebuilding the temple of Jerusalem, while he restored half-ruined shrines of the old gods, and exhibited his one extravagance in a multitude of sacrifices. He even paid Christianity the compliment of modelling his revived faith in part on the example of its discipline and services. He had more than he knew of the spirit that was absorbing the dregs of ancient civilization; and his fanatical zeal was a stumbling-block to his own party. His apostasy was not so much to the Pantheon of Rome as to the later ideals of Greece and to Oriental mysticism: he seems to have reverenced the Mithra of Persian sun-worship rather than Jove. But he forbade the Christians to teach the young, barred them from office, and indirectly he brought such pressure to bear on the sect he sought to belittle as Galileans that the mass of facile converts made under Constantine and his successor easily turned back to the creed that had now a promise of loaves and fishes; and if the emperor did not directly persecute, crafty magistrates and superstitious mobs might take on themselves to interpret his sympathies.

One so-called martyr of this reign was the George of Cappadocia, who seems to have so unworthily slipped into fame as our English patron saint.[1] Of humble origin and dubious antecedents, as an Arian partisan he had managed to become archbishop of Alexandria, where he made himself hated by his pride and exactions. He had already been overthrown by mob violence, to be replaced by authority, when on the accession of Julian the populace dragged him to prison and death. The new emperor but gently rebuked this tumult, and when Athanasius resumed the seat of his overthrown rival, Julian again instigated the banishment of that often-exiled prelate, waxing too loud in religious controversy. The degenerate Christians of Antioch, the capital of Asia, had another complaint against the pagan emperor in his scornful disgust at their licentious morals. The enemy of the Cross gave an example of Christian virtues in his ascetic life, and in showing no keen thirst for bloodshed when he swept the court clean of his predecessor's minions. So Prudentius, a Christian poet of the next century, has to confess of this renegade:

Perfidus ille Deo, quamvis non perfidus orbi.[2]

But Julian had hardly time to display his character and policy. In the second year of his reign he led against Sapor an army of over 60,000 warriors gathered from various parts of his vast dominion. At first all went well: descending the Euphrates in a fleet of boats,

[1] So, at least, according to Gibbon and other historians; but Mr. Baring-Gould inclines to find our St. George in a soldier who bravely faced dragons of persecution; and he has also been identified with a young man who exasperated Diocletian by tearing down his persecuting edict.

[2] Faithless to God, although not to the world.

which he rashly burnt to prevent them falling into the hands of the enemy, the emperor ravaged Mesopotamia and penetrated as far as the Persian capital, Ctesiphon on the Tigris, where that river draws nearest to the Euphrates at Babylon. But want of provisions and ignorance of the country drove him to retreat, harassed by the active Persians; and in a chance fray Julian was mortally wounded. He is reported as dying with philosophic composure, not without a long oration and Socratic discussion on the nature of the soul; but religious tradition puts into his mouth as his last words: "Thou hast conquered, O Galilean!"

Unwisely, as it seems, the emperor refused to name any successor. The army hastily elected Jovian (A.D. 363), a popular officer, who soon showed himself unfit by buying peace at the cost of giving up the Roman conquests from Persia. He hurried off to enjoy the luxurious ease of Antioch, but died within the year. Another soldier, Valentinian, was then chosen, and adopted as colleague his brother, Valens, dividing between them the western and the eastern world. All these princes being Christians, though of no Christian temper, the reaction fomented by Julian came to naught, leaving the Christian Church torn by the quarrel of Arians and Athanasians, and other heresies which still gave excuse for local persecution. But, after Julian, it had no more to fear from the old religion, whose extinction would now be but a matter of time.

Under princely patronage the Church naturally tended to mould itself upon the empire. As reorganized by Diocletian and Constantine the state had lost all show of its republican origin, unless some time-honoured titles; but for the most part new titles had been found to deck a host of officials who depended solely on the emperor's favour. The world was divided into four quarters governed by as many imperial prefects, while Constantinople and Rome had each a prefect of its own as governor. A fuller division was into thirteen dioceses under vice-prefects or vicars; and these were subdivided into more than a hundred provinces, the magistrates of which bore various titles. The prefects had been originally commanders of the Prætorian guard, now abolished; but the masters of so many courtiers, chamberlains, and slaves took care to have about them some body of sturdy warriors enlisted from any part of their dominions, or from outer barbarians. The old Roman proconsuls had been both generals and administrators: the later emperors separated military from civil power, jealously keeping under their own direct control the army, for whose commanders now appear the titles *count* (companion or peer) and *duke* (leader) that in the course of centuries came to exchange their relative dignity, while one most exalted rank has fallen to the level of our police constable, a word corrupted from *comes stabuli*, "Count of the Stable". Patrician, Master of the Soldiery, and Master of the Horse, were other titles that would soon grow familiar. All this machinery of government went to repress patriotic spirit in the governed, looked on as taxpayers rather than citizens.

Constantine unfortunately organized the government of the Roman Empire as if it were the household of the emperor, and constituted the imperial officials as a caste separate from the people; thus placing it from its very nature in opposition to the mass of his subjects. In his desire to save the world from anarchy, he created that struggle between the administration and the governed which has ever since existed, either actively or passively, in every country which has inherited the monarchical principle and the laws of imperial Rome. . . . The chief attention of the imperial governors in the provinces was directed to preventing any diminution in the revenue, and the Roman legislation attempted to enforce the payment of the ancient amount of land-tax and capitation from a declining and impoverished population. Laws were enacted to fix every class of society in its condition with regard to the revenue. The son of a member of the curia was bound to take his father's place; the son of a landed proprietor could neither become a tradesman nor a soldier, unless he had a brother who could replace his father as a payer of the land-tax. The son of an artisan was bound to follow his father's profession, that the amount of the capitation might not be diminished. Every corporation or guild had the power of compelling the children of its members to complete its numbers. Fiscal conservatism became the spirit of Roman legislation. To prevent the land beyond the limits of a municipality from falling out of cultivation, by the free inhabitants of the rural districts quitting their lands in order to better their condition in the towns, the laws gradually attached them to the soil, and converted them into agricultural serfs.—Finlay's *History of Greece.*

This was still the Roman empire, though its centre had been shifted to the edge of Asia, and its spirit was being debased by Eastern alloy. Presently, first the empire, then the Church, would split into two. But old Rome, left stranded by the main currents of history, yet raised her palaces and temples so high in the eyes of the world that her very name long stood a title to veneration. St. Augustine's *City of God* was but a glorified reflection in the sky of that seat of earthly consuls and Cæsars whose laws, arts, and literature were to fall a heritage to the new order.

## CHAPTER X

# The Barbarians (A.D. 378–526)

In the fifth century there appears a confusion of salient personalities standing up for landmarks; and we must trace its history in a series of names successively marking the movement of the age. This was the crushing in and breaking up of the empire by barbarian hosts so often repelled from its northern frontiers, on which for a time they might vary the parts of subjects, allies, or enemies of Rome. The chief heroes are Theodosius the Great and Theodoric, their rule separated by nearly a hundred years, in which Alaric the Goth and Attila the Hun played more meteoric parts, as did other foreign ravagers, and more than one general of Rome who was no Roman by birth.

We have already seen how among the most formidable of such invaders were the Goths, a branch of our own Teuton stock who, pushing south in the second century, settled on the Black Sea and about the Danube. Rome had been fain to keep them quiet by giving up to them the province of Dacia, where they got some tincture of Roman civilization while for a time they turned their arms upon ruder neighbours. Among all those warlike peoples from the north the Goths seem to have been most open to progressive influences. One youth named Wulfila or Ulfilas, educated at Constantinople, perhaps as a hostage, became a fervent Christian, and started a missionary work among his countrymen, which, after a good deal of discord, brought about their conversion to Arian Christianity of a stamp to be guessed from the story that in his translation of the Scriptures Ulfilas thought best to omit some Old Testament records of bloodshed.

This race had split into two bodies, the *Ostrogoths* and the *Visigoths*, so called as living on the east and the west side respectively. The Ostrogoths showed themselves at first the more united and organized, growing into a considerable state when towards the end of the fourth century they were for a time submerged under an invasion of the more savage Huns, a Mongol host from Asia. Flying before this inroad, a whole tribe of Christian Visigoths sought permission to take refuge across the Danube as subjects of the Roman empire. The emperor Valens received them on certain conditions, soon broken by avaricious Roman officials who took advantage of their distress to make profit out of the provision supply that had been promised them. The starving multitude, swollen by Ostrogothic fugitives, runaway slaves, and other rebels, took to plunder and devastation, and pushed their

hostile march almost as far as Constantinople. Valentinian, the more vigorous emperor of the west, had lately died (A.D. 375), whose son, Gratian, found his own hands full of fighting with the Germans; but he sent help to the Eastern empire as soon as possible. The weak and unwarlike Valens would not listen to his generals urging caution. He sallied out from Adrianople, to lose his life and his army in a fierce battle (A.D. 378). The Goths could not follow up their victory against fortified cities, but they ravaged the Balkan provinces to the shores of the Adriatic, till checked by a new champion of the empire.

Gratian, young and inexperienced, had the sense to pick out as colleague the Spanish soldier Theodosius, son of a general of the same name who had already distinguished himself in Britain; and he took over the charge of the East, soon showing himself well chosen. He sought to make friends with the Goths as foemen worthy of his steel, allowing them to settle in the provinces south of the Danube, not as subjects but as allies of the empire, bound to give a strong contingent for service in its armies. He would soon have need of such ready soldiers. In the west Gratian was overthrown and slain by the usurper Maximus, who at first let a younger son and namesake of Valentinian keep Italy and Africa under the guardianship of his mother, Justina. But when Maximus invaded Italy with an army of Germans, young Valentinian turned for help to Theodosius, who marched his Gothic allies against the usurper. Both those rivals were Spaniards by birth, encountering in Italy to decide its fate with barbarian troops. Theodosius conquered and Maximus was slain (A.D. 388).

Martial ambition was not the only ferment at work in the decrepit empire. Valentinian and his mother were Arians, while Theodosius upheld the opposite side of the great controversy. So did the bishop of Milan, St. Ambrose, first great saint of the Church militant, who sternly refused Justina's demand to give up two of his churches to the heretical sect. The imperial officers used force; but the mob rose to support their beloved bishop, and for the first time the court gave way to a spiritual authority. Theodosius himself, orthodox as he was, would soon learn how a power had risen that could set its foot on the necks of princes. During the three years he spent in Italy he heard of a riot at Thessalonica, where some of his arrogant Gothic officers had been killed; and in his wrath he gave order for the whole population to be exterminated, carried out by the slaughter of thousands of men, women, and children gathered together in the circus (A.D. 390). The news of this massacre sent a shudder through the Christian world; and when Theodosius would have entered the church at Milan, Ambrose stood in the door barring God's house against the shedder of innocent blood. Thus excommunicated, the proud emperor stooped before this Christian Nathan, but not for months, having done penance for his sin, was he admitted at Christmas to the rites of the Church. Baptized ten

years before, he had lost no time in denouncing Arianism as deserving the divine displeasure and his own. He deposed the Arian patriarch of Constantinople, where a second general council then affirmed the Nicene Creed as the Catholic faith.

This conqueror, who so imperfectly exemplified his creed, took a step beyond former Christian emperors in repressing paganism. His predecessor, Gratian, had been the first to refuse the ancient dignity of Chief Pontiff. Theodosius forbade offering sacrifices to the gods; bands of soldiers and monks were let loose for the congenial work of demolishing temples; and the worship of idols was made a capital crime. Persecution being thus turned the other way about, the old religion withered under it as Christianity had thriven; but for over a century yet pagans would be found in different parts of the empire, and not only among villagers. At Rome itself, the ancient gods were still cherished, like an heirloom, among the degenerate nobles; and Theodosius had a notable struggle with the Senate about the removal of the altar of Victory that seemed the emblem of past Roman glory.

The pagan cause found a champion in one of his own generals, the German Arbogast who had recovered Gaul, over which young Valentinian was named emperor, soon to be murdered, when he kicked against the dictation of his guardian. Arbogast set up as independent; but so strong was the reverence for Rome that, not being a Roman citizen, he durst not himself assume the title of emperor, which he bestowed upon his secretary Eugenius. With Hercules as device on their banners, they led a mixed army of Franks and Germans to meet Theodosius near the head of the Adriatic. The battle lasted two days (A.D. 396), ending in victory for Theodosius, and the death of the pretenders. His empire thus left unquestioned, Theodosius pressed on the crusade against paganism. The sacred fire, guarded by Vestal Virgins, was extinguished at Rome. The Olympic Games of Greece were held for the last time A.D. 394. Next year Theodosius died, dividing the empire between his two sons, the eastern or Greek countries going to Arcadius, the elder, and to the younger, Honorius, the western lands, where Latin was the dominant tongue.

At the death of Theodosius the outlines of the Roman empire were much the same as in the time of Augustus, but the whole rotten structure was crumbling away under pressure of the barbarians who would soon cut it up into new kingdoms. These so-called barbarians were not altogether barbarous. They had gained some of the civilization of Rome without losing their fierce manliness, and many of them had been converted to a coarse-grained Christianity. On the other hand, the sons of Rome and Greece were reverting to a barbarism bred by poverty and weakness, while they had lost all martial temper and even the use of arms.

Some Roman families were still enormously rich; but it would not be Catos and Scipios who had saved their fortunes from the

Photo. Sebah & Joaillier

PEDESTAL OF THE OBELISK OF THOTHMES III, CONSTANTINOPLE

The obelisk stands in its original place, in the centre of the celebrated Hippodrome (now the At-meïdan). During the reign of Theodosius it was thrown to the ground by an earthquake. The Greek and Latin inscriptions on the base refer to the re-erection of the obelisk by the Emperor's orders.

The bas-reliefs on the pedestal represent the Emperor Theodosius, the Empress Galla, and their sons presiding at scenes in the Hippodrome.

chances of tyranny or the waste of senseless extravagance. The contemporary historian, Ammianus Marcellinus, gives a censorious picture of Roman life in the fourth century, reduced in scale for us as below by one of our own students of the period. But it is possible that we see this society too much through the eyes of perhaps esurient and envious satirists: *per contra* let us take into account Friedländer's plea that the luxury of these aristocrats largely went in democratic channels, in entertaining, in public spectacles and benefactions, in supporting troops of clients and battalions of slaves, the latter not always ill used, often able to earn their freedom, and not seldom evincing hearty devotion to their masters. The old Roman spirit lived longer among the nobles than among the mob that had sold its liberty for bread and shows.

The men who owned these enormous fortunes seemed to Ammianus to be for the most part cold-hearted and effeminate dandies, unworthy of the great name of Rome, whose foremost citizens they were. A lofty chariot would be one man's sign of distinction, another covered himself with a multitude of cloaks of finest silken texture, each one fastened round his neck by a jewelled clasp, and perpetually wriggled his body about or waved his hand in order to call the attention of the bystanders to the gay fringes of his robe or the figures of animals embroidered upon it in divers colours of needlework. Others strutted along the street followed by a whole army of retainers, and when they entered the public baths attended by at least fifty slaves, at once began to shout out in a voice that was meant to strike awe into all humbler visitors: "Where are my people?" A contemptuous toss of the head was all that they vouchsafed to an acquaintance; to the fawning flatterer who was hungering for their smile they would contemptuously offer a hand or a knee to kiss. But all this affectation of aristocratic *hauteur* vanished when some women of doubtful reputation drew near, or when news was brought to them of some fresh horses or charioteers of extraordinary skill. The banquet was to these men a time of dull and solemn sensuality. When the panting slave placed on the table a fish or a turkey of unusual size, they would send for the scales and order it to be weighed, and then one of the crowd of hungry secretaries standing by would be called upon to record the prodigy on his tablets. Beyond this kind of employment for the pen, their ideas either of literature or of science hardly soared.

Thus empty and frivolous appeared to a contemporary satirist the lives of the Roman nobility. Of the poorer citizens he gives us fewer details, but we can see that for them as for their ancestors the interest of life was summed up in three words: *Panem et Circenses*—bread and circus-shows. By a well-understood bargain between the Roman mob and the Roman Emperor—a bargain which lasted through all the centuries from Iulius to Augustulus—he was bound to provide them with at least food enough to keep them from starving, and with a proper amount of excitement in the form of games, chariot races, and fights of gladiators and wild beasts; and if he failed in this, the first duty of a ruler, his diadem and his life were both forfeit. The elaborate provisions of the Theodosian code enable us to understand how the duty of feeding the mob was per-

formed. We see the householders of Rome seated on broad flights of stairs throughout the fourteen regions of the City, and receiving from the slaves who obeyed the orders of the Superintendent of Supply (*Præfectus Annonæ*) their loaves of fine wheaten flour, each weighing about a pound and a half, and, in addition, a certain quantity of oil.

—Dr. Hodgkin's *Dynasty of Theodosius.*

Among a so deteriorated race the Goths and other Teutons burst their way like the long-dominant Manchus in China. Under feeble emperors there now came to the front a new kind of ruler, like the Arbogast already mentioned: some barbarian soldier who, with the title of Patrician or Master of the Army, was content to be the right hand of a fainéant prince. Such a one was Stilicho, a Vandal, whom Theodosius had appointed to be the guardian of his son Honorius. Stilicho had the luck of having a *vates sacer* in Claudian, the last of the Latin poets; but his services show him deserving of fame not unblemished by personal faults. He was soon able to lend a hand to the Eastern empire, where the government had stirred a hornet's nest in offending the Gothic soldiery whose employment by Theodosius was a sore point for the pride of Constantinople. The Goths rose under their young chief, Alaric, marched through Greece, plundering or putting to ransom its famous cities, and made their way into the Peloponnesus. There they were attacked by Stilicho, who hemmed Alaric into a mountainous corner where he seemed caught in a trap. But the alert Goth managed to break loose, crossed back to the mainland, and so frightened the court at Constantinople that it made haste to come to terms by giving him the government of Illyricum, including the northern part of the Balkan peninsula, with which he seemed to be content, but secretly prepared to revenge himself on Roman interference.

Stilicho returned to Italy, ungratefully snubbed by the court of Constantinople, at which his ill wisher Rufinus held the same authority as he in the west. Three years later, while he was fighting in Gaul, Alaric took advantage of his absence to invade the basin of the Po, where Milan was now the emperor's capital. For a time he had it all his own way, till Stilicho came back to defeat him more than once. The chief battle (A.D. 402) was at Pollentia, where the Arian Goths are said to have been surprised at their Good Friday devotions, too rashly crediting an orthodox foe with the same attention to religious duty. More than once now we find raw Christians excusing a defeat on the score of having desecrated a holy day by arms. For some reason, however, Stilicho did not care to press his success, even was willing to buy off the invaders, so Alaric could recross the Alps with some substantial fruit of victory, while Honorius held a vain triumph at Rome. This still ranked as a capital of sentiment; but now the western emperor took up his residence at Ravenna, a city whose strongest defence was the surrounding fever-stricken marshland trenched by streams and canals.

Stilicho's forbearance as regards Alaric may well have been prompted by his own retreat from Gaul, leaving it open to incursions of Vandals, German Suevi, and savage eastern Alani, perhaps pressed into the empire by the advance of the Huns from their Scythian steppes. From Britain the legions had been gradually withdrawn, till in A.D. 406 the last of them left that threatened island, henceforth lost to the dwindling empire. This was a few years after Claudian had vainly written:

> Wearing the Caledonian monster's spoils,[1]
> With cheeks tatooed, and clad about her feet
> In what seemed ocean blue, Britannia spoke:
> "Me too did Stilicho uphold in need,
> When oars from Ireland lashed the sea to foam;
> His was my shield against the Scottish darts,
> And his the voice that bade me fear no more
> The savage Pict, nor dread from guarded coast
> The Saxon pirate borne on hostile winds".

In A.D. 406 Italy itself was again invaded by a fiercer host of heathens from various quarters, said to have numbered 200,000, with their wives and families. This enemy also Stilicho overcame at Florence. But soon Rome threw away that shield against the barbarian. Stilicho seems to have been intriguing with Alaric to help him in purposes of his own, and he persuaded the Senate to enlist the Gothic king by a grant of money for service in Gaul. Now his enemies won over Honorius, who owed so much to him, and was his son-in-law, yet he let himself be persuaded to have Stilicho put to death.

The treaty with Alaric being unfulfilled, he took that excuse to re-enter Italy, there joined by many of Stilicho's barbarian soldiers, whom the infatuated Roman government was for dismissing as Arians or unbelievers. Almost without resistance he marched upon Rome (A.D. 409), not venturing to attack Ravenna. Nor did he try to storm Rome, but besieged it, starving out the large population till it bought him off with an enormous ransom, stated as 5000 pounds of gold, 30,000 pounds of silver, 4000 purple robes, as many of silk, and 4000 pounds of pepper, then as rare an Eastern luxury as silk. Gathering up runaway slaves as recruits, he came northwards to negotiate with the emperor for an arrangement by which he should be placed in much the same position as Stilicho's. When his proposals were rejected he returned upon Rome, again to starve out the city by seizing its port at the Tiber mouth. This time he set up Attalus, prefect of Rome, as emperor, in whose name he hoped to secure his demands. Soon indeed he fell out with his own puppet, deposing Attalus, whose purple robe and crown he sent to Honorius as a bait for peace. But the court, encouraged by help from Constantinople, thought itself strong enough to defy him from behind the

[1] Tusks, said to be those of the legendary Calydonian boar, were exhibited at Naples in this age; and they may have suggested to the poet something like a pun.

walls of Ravenna. A third time he swooped upon Rome, one of whose gates was now opened by force or treachery, and eight centuries after Brennus the city was again given up to plunder by an alien army (A.D. 410).

Alaric seems to have felt scruples as to violating the capital of his faith: he appointed the churches of St. Peter and St. Paul as sanctuaries, and sought to put some measure to the sufferings of a sacked city; but he could not wholly restrain his exultant warriors, still less the slaves freed to wreak their sullen hatred on cruel masters, who themselves might now be reduced to slavery. Some of the victors are said to have shown a Christian spirit of forbearance, and Gibbon insists that the ravages now wrought on Rome were less horrible than those carried out, eleven centuries later, by the troops of the most Catholic emperor, Charles V. But woeful indeed must have been the scene of nocturnal surprise, its horrors enhanced by torches spreading fire to consume the gardened palace of Sallust and other marvels of ancient art. The Goths burst in with an alarm of clanging trumpets and wild chants that roused the inhabitants, swelling the din by shrieks and lamentations as the glow of conflagration on all sides drove them out to meet the swords of the furious foe. The fire was winged by a storm that over the uproar burst in thunder of amazing violence, as if heaven lent a hand to man in laying low the proud city. Prominent buildings were struck by lightning, especially the temples and monuments of the old gods, dismaying pagans as well as Christians with superstitious amazement; the Forum was blasted, its statues strewn on the blood-stained ground. Murder, rape, and pillage raged beside the flames, and not for nearly a week did the Goths glut their lust for destruction, leaving smoking ruins, among which the images of the old faith lay scorched or melted beneath broken shrines which the Cross could not save. St. Jerome, perhaps exaggerating somewhat in his fierce resentment, says that one mass of flame had buried all Rome in ashes.

So lurid an exploit was Alaric's last. He moved southward, seeking to cross over to Africa, whence he might master Italy by cutting off its chief corn supply. But now, when only thirty-five, he died, perhaps of such a fever as has killed many a visitor to those malarious shores. His sorrowful warriors set slaves to divert the River Busento, and in the old channel they buried their beloved king with rich trophies of his spoil, over which then they let the water flow back, the workmen being slain that Alaric's grave should for ever be hidden in this foreign land.

Atawulf (Adolphus), who succeeded him as king of the Goths, did not push the conquest of Italy, but wandered off to Gaul, apparently with a commission from Honorius to put down an usurper there. But usurpers and new kingdoms were springing up like hydra heads. The prominent names in Roman history now are those of the Patricians who defended the empire, sometimes making and unmaking its nominal heads. In Constantius Honorius found such another champion, able

to drive the Goths into Spain; but for services done there to the empire against turbulent Vandals and Alans, they were afterwards allowed to settle a rich tract of Gaul, with Toulouse as its capital, while other barbarian kingdoms rose and fell around. Constantius was so successful against some of these invaders that he took the title of Augustus, having married the emperor's sister Placidia, recovered from captive queendom among the Goths. He died soon after his elevation; and his widow, falling out with her brother, took asylum in Constantinople. Honorius died and was buried in a tomb still to be seen at Ravenna. After an interval of usurpation Placidia returned with her young son, Valentinian III, in whose name she undertook to rule Italy.

Under this regency the sword of Rome was wielded by Aëtius, brought up in youth as a hostage among Goths and Huns, whom he could now enlist in her service. Having slain his rival, Boniface, he became commander of the Roman armies, when, a generation after the death of Alaric, both empires were menaced by a more ruthless foe. Attila, king of the Huns, made himself known to shuddering Europe as "the Scourge of God", described by hate and fear as a hideous monster of savagery, and his Mongol people as the offspring of demons and witches. They had now established themselves in the region to which they left their name, but under Attila their excursions overwhelmed the greater part of the continent, from the Caspian to the Baltic, from the Volga to the Rhine, forcing many tribes into a great confederacy whose chief boasted that the grass never grew where his horse's hoof had trod. It has been surmised, with some probability, that it was the pressure of Attila's conquest that drove our Saxon forefathers to make settlements in Britain. He is said to have formed an alliance as far east as China, and thus to have neutralized another Tartar host that would have pressed him from that side as he pressed upon the western tribes. Not for the first nor the last time now did Asian hordes overflow from their steppes into Europe.

Towards the middle of the century Attila is found loftily demanding tribute both from the eastern and the western empires. On Rome, if tales tell true, he had a half-romantic claim. Honoria, daughter of Placidia, had been punished for her frailties by confinement at Constantinople, and is said to have sent a ring to Attila, inviting him to be her husband and deliverer. The Hun was willing enough to add this forward princess to his harem, but demanded half the western empire as her dowry. On other causes of dispute embassies went and came between the parties, and one of those sent to Attila included a certain Priscus, who has left us an account of his barbarian state.

The geography of this narrative is obscure, but it seems to have been somewhere about the Hungarian course of the Danube or the Theiss that the envoys reached a large village or fixed camp, in which was conspicuous the king's "palace" of logs and planks, enclosed by palisades and dignified by turrets. Each of his many wives had a

separate lodge, in one of which, showing some pretensions to ornament, Priscus and his companions had an audience of the *sultana valide*, or queen, whom they found among her damsels working at showy attire for the warriors. Rather more modest than Attila's was the house of Onegesius, his chief counsellor, but that personage had close at hand a bath, the only stone structure in the place, built for him by a captive architect. This was not the only slave carried off from the empire into barbarian bondage, for Priscus was astonished to be saluted in Greek by a well dressed and trimmed ex-merchant, who had married among the Huns, and, thanks to his master's favour, smilingly declared himself better off than in his harassed fatherland.

The strangers were invited by Attila to dinner at "the ninth hour", three in the afternoon. On entering, a bowl of wine was offered them, that they might drink to the health of their host before taking seats ranged along the walls. In the centre the king sat on a couch below his bed, which was curtained by white linen and ornamental hangings. His elder son sat beside him with eyes cast down in apparent awe; but when a younger boy came up to him, later on, the grim father revealed a touch of nature by pinching his cheek and giving him a kindly look. His dress was quite plain, but clean, remarked Priscus, as if this quality were less noticeable in the array of his nobles, who adorned their arms, the bridles, and even the shoes of their horses with gold and precious stones. The king's plate and cup also were of wood, whereas the guests had gold and silver vessels, no doubt got in the way of plunder. They ate at separate tables in messes of three or four, well supplied with meat, bread, relishes, and wine; but Attila's fare was flesh alone. Each guest had a cup-bearer, and if the king sent his cup to anyone, the man thus honoured stood up till he had drained it off. There was much drinking to him between each of the courses, which must have tried an unaccustomed head if Hungarian wine were then as strong as it is now. Some students have put at Tokay the scene of this Hunnish hospitality, which throughout ran much to strong liquor; and the sober visitors were glad to slip off to bed, leaving their hosts in full carousal.

When it grew dark, two barbarian minstrels had come in by torchlight to recite the praises of Attila's virtues and exploits, moving an eagerly intent audience, the young to excitement and the old to tears. After the singing, comic performers had their turn, a madman and a black dwarf, who by gibbering antics set all the company into fits of laughter, except only the stern host, elsewhere described as short, squat, and big-headed, with short nose, small eyes, sallow skin, and thin beard. This is the type of a Tartar, and the description of his rude court is not unlike what may be seen to-day in a Mongol chief's *yurt*; nor indeed were his revels more barbarous than those of the German and Gothic "kings" he turned into vassals. In quite modern days we read of Hungarian feasts as graced by the like rude minstrelsy. One of Attila's nobles, by the way, was named Scotta, which, we may

ATTILA

J. E. DELAUNAY

hope, had no ethnological significance. The present natives of Scotland, at all events, cannot be described as having faces like dirty lumps of dough, with two black points deeply set in them for eyes. The Huns were active horsemen, riding on the same small ponies as serve Kalmucks and Kirghiz for food, skins, and milk, as well as in hunting and shepherding their herds.

Attila first attacked Constantinople; then, baffled by its fortifications, he swept through ancient Greece, till bought off by the eastern emperor. Aëtius, who seems indeed to have kept up some friendly relation with the Huns, did not interfere so long as they ravaged the East, but when Attila gathered half a million of warriors under a "crowd of kings" to burst across Europe upon Gaul, the Roman general headed a confederacy of Visigoths and Franks united for the moment by a common dread. In the plain of Champagne, apparently near Troyes, was fought one of the bloodiest fields in history, misnamed the battle of Chalons (A.D. 450), where such slaughter was made among the hordes of Attila that amazed chroniclers counted the dead at from 160,000 to 300,000; this is, no doubt, an exaggeration, nor was the defeat of the Huns a crushing one, though for the moment their progress had been checked.

Drawing back to the Danube, where his chief seat has been guessed to be near Budapest, next year Attila invaded the country at the head of the Adriatic, which had come to rank as a precinct of Italy. It was now that Venice was founded in the lagoons of the coast by fugitives from his ravages. There was so little force to oppose him on his march to Rome that Aëtius and the emperor thought of deserting Italy. But St. Leo, the bishop of Rome, boldly came to meet the triumphant Hun, warning him: "Thus far and no farther!" Ready belief in the miraculous backed his warning with an appearance of St. Peter and St. Paul to threaten the king who should harm their votaries. Attila's heart may have been moved, by superstition more probably than by mercy, and he turned back into the northern wilds. More than once, indeed, heathen as he was, he showed some respect for the holy men of Christendom, which yet had reason to draw a breath of relief when before long he died suddenly in a drunken bout. Soon his loose conglomeration of vassals was split up by quarrels, and the quickly risen power as quickly fell to pieces. The chief effect of his irruption was as displacing or absorbing certain tribes, and pushing others into collision with the civilized world, such as the Gepids, now found formidable on the Danube. Else so little mark did Attila's desolating career make on Europe that he is best remembered as the "Etzel" of German romance, rather a chivalrous and considerate king in some stories, where he appears as married to that fierce heroine, Criemhild, who in the Nibelungenlied took such vengeance for her first husband, Siegfried.

Next year Aëtius suffered the fate of Stilicho in being murdered by the ungrateful Valentinian, who might well be told that thus he had cut off his right hand with his left. He himself was assassinated by

resentful soldiers; then, against the usurper they set up, his widow, Eudoxia, is said to have called in Gaiseric, or Genseric, the Vandal king of Africa. The Vandals, pushing to the south of Spain, where they have perhaps left their name in Andalusia, took to robbery by sea also, and crossed to the Barbary coast to found there such a piratical state as would trouble Europe down to the beginning of the nineteenth century. Gaiseric now landed in Italy (A.D. 455) once more to sack Rome, carrying off among his plunder, along with thousands of slaves, the golden vessels brought by Titus from the temple of Jerusalem; but one legend makes the seven-branched candlestick thrown into the Tiber from the Milvian Bridge, where it may be hidden to this day.

Gaiseric at once retired with his spoils, leaving Rome to fresh struggles of ineffectual ambition. The barbarian Rikimer, under the title of Patrician, now became so powerful as to make and unmake several emperors, the best of them Marjorian, who tried to restore the shattered state. When Rikimer died, after bringing civil war into the streets of Rome, the next dominant general was Orestes, who (A.D. 475) put on the throne his son Romulus, nicknamed Augustulus. This "Augustus the Little" was the last emperor to hold a shadow of power in the city of that legendary founder whose name fate gave him as if in mockery.

Before long his troops mutinied, choosing for their leader Odoacer, taken to be chief of the Heruli, wildest of all the Teuton tribes that sent soldiers to Italy. Orestes being killed, Odoacer made at first a show of governing in the name of his son, Augustulus. But in A.D. 480 the poor boy was put aside, and the Senate, no doubt under dictation, abolished the empire of the west, setting up this barbarian chief as viceroy, with offers of allegiance to the eastern emperor, Zeno. Zeno chose to recognize another shadowy emperor, Julius Nepos, who was murdered before he could come near his throne; then Odoacer became practical king, though he still sought a title in the favour of that sovereign whose imposing title now stood alone in the world. This was the first barbarian who ruled Italy in his own name, and he showed a disposition to rule well, but his career proved short.

Zeno sullenly persisted in treating Odoacer as a rebellious usurper, but for some years was not able to interfere, till in the Ostrogothic king Theodoric he found a bailiff able and willing to execute his writ. Educated as a hostage at Constantinople, this greatest of the Goths came home to serve an apprenticeship to war in the conflicts of neighbouring tribes released from Attila's domination; then, succeeding his father at the age of twenty, he led his people into the bounds of the eastern empire. There he did service to Zeno against another army of insolent Goths, but was so ill rewarded by his feeble and treacherous employer that he in turn took to open rebellion. It was to get rid of such a doubtful vassal that Zeno gave him the commission to overthrow Odoacer in Italy.

In A.D. 488 Theodoric set out on this errand at the head of his whole

EUROPE
SHOWING
BARBARIAN AND
BYZANTINE EMPIRES
520 A.D.
English Miles
0 50 100 200 300 400
CALEDONIA
Picts
Scots
HIBERNIA
BRITAIN
JUTES
SAXONS
SLAVES
HUNS
LONGOBARDS
Heruli
GEPIDÆ
THURINGIANS
Alamanni
EMPIRE OF THE FRANKS
BURGUNDIAN KINGDOM
SUEVIAN KINGDOM
EMPIRE OF THE VISI-GOTHS
EMPIRE OF THE OSTRO-GOTHS
EMPIRE OF THE VANDALS
BYZANTINE EMPIRE
Thracia
Pontus
Asia
Sardinia
Corsica
Sicilia
Creta
Cyprus
Britain
Saxons
Jutes
Saliens
Colonia
Treves
Metis
Regina
Vindobona
Lauriacum
Tiburnia
Poetovio
Tridentum
Aquileia
Verona
Ravenna
Genua
Pisæ
Perusia
Ancon
Salonæ
Sirmium
Naissus
Marcianopolis
Odessus
Sinope
Tropeus
Heraclea
Nicomedia
Amasia
Cæsarea
Antiochia
Collinicus
Tarsus
Iconium
Ephesus
Laodicea
Myra
Rhodus
Tripolis
Damascus
Tyrus
Jerusalem (Ælia)
Alexandria
Cyrene
Berenice
Paratonium
Leptis Magna
Carthago
Hippo Regius
Hippo Zarytus
Lilybæum
Panormus
Rhegium
Syracusæ
Agrigentum
Hadrumentum
Thapsus
Cæsarea
Tingis
Gades
Malaca
Hispalis
Illiberis
Corduba
Oretum
Emerita
Segobrica
Tarraco
Barcino
Gerunda
Dertosa
Segovia
Cæsaraugusta
Complutum
Toletum
Pampilona
Palentia
Bracara
Portucale
Conimbriga
Ulisipona
Lusitania
Narbona
Massilia
Arelate
Avenio
Tolosa
Nemausus
Vienna
Lugdunum
Divio
Vindonissa
Augustodunum
Andematunum
Andecavi
Turonis
Remi
Suessiones
Tellinus
Ternacum
Armorica
Aurelianum
Parisii
Sagittarius
Ambiani
Bellovaci
Rotomagus
Britannia
Britannia
Gesoriacum
Londinium
Saxons
Jutes
Rhenus
Mosella
Sequana
Liger
Garumna
Tigris
Quida
Sardinia
Corsica
Minorica
Majorica
Ebusus
Valentia
Carthago Spartaria

people, two or three hundred thousand souls with cattle and baggage, seeking new homes on distant fields of battle. Such Gothic migrations were like the exodus of Israel. Nearly a year was spent fighting a way up the Danube and the Save, then over the eastern Alps, beyond which the Goths found Odoacer waiting to defend that Italian promised land. The main battle was at Verona (A.D. 489), where Theodoric conquered with great slaughter. Odoacer first fled to Rome, but, the gates being shut against him, he took refuge in Ravenna, and presently was able to make head against the invader. But Theodoric, reinforced by Visigoths from Gaul, again drove Odoacer back into Ravenna; then his own forces spread unchecked over the country. That Odoacer had not made himself loved was shown by a general massacre of his partisans; and the Senate proposed to accept Theodoric as king. After nearly three years' siege in Ravenna, Odoacer was starved into surrender, a bargain being struck that he and Theodoric should reign jointly. It is said that under a show of reconciliation each of them meant foul play to the other; if so, Theodoric anticipated his rival, whom he killed with his own hand a few days after entering Ravenna (A.D. 493).

This fierce deed inaugurated a reign on the whole notable, just, and merciful, so as to win for Theodoric the title of Great. For more than thirty years of absolute rule he exerted himself to bring Italy out of the miserable state into which she had fallen, and with such success that his time could be looked back to as a shining interval in that clouded history. His two main difficulties were questions of race and religion. The Goths, on whose swords he depended, had to be settled among a foreign people, and this he apparently managed with least friction by dispossessing the followers of Odoacer rather than the Italian peasants. He himself was an Arian, but the Catholic bishop Epiphanius is credited with winning influence over him that brought forth the amnesty and decree of toleration he soon proclaimed for all his new subjects. He showed himself ahead of most theologians of his time, for he protected even the Jews, now exposed to persecution by triumphant Christians; and one of his letters, probably worded for him by some wise minister, contains a doctrine that would not be accepted in Christendom for over a thousand years: "Religion is not to be commanded, because no man can be forced to believe against his will". He sternly purified justice, restored the finances of the impoverished state, encouraged commerce and agriculture, according to his lights. The Goths have won a proverbial bad name for lust of destruction, which seems more fairly fixed on the Vandals; this Goth, at all events, was concerned to preserve the noble monuments of Rome, and to patronize the arts, as also letters, though it is said, perhaps untruly, that he had never learned to write. No barbarian could be so little barbarous.

Like other Teuton soldiers, Theodoric had such respect for the dignity of Rome that he would not take the title of emperor. He ruled in Italy as king, one now of several who were consolidating kingdoms

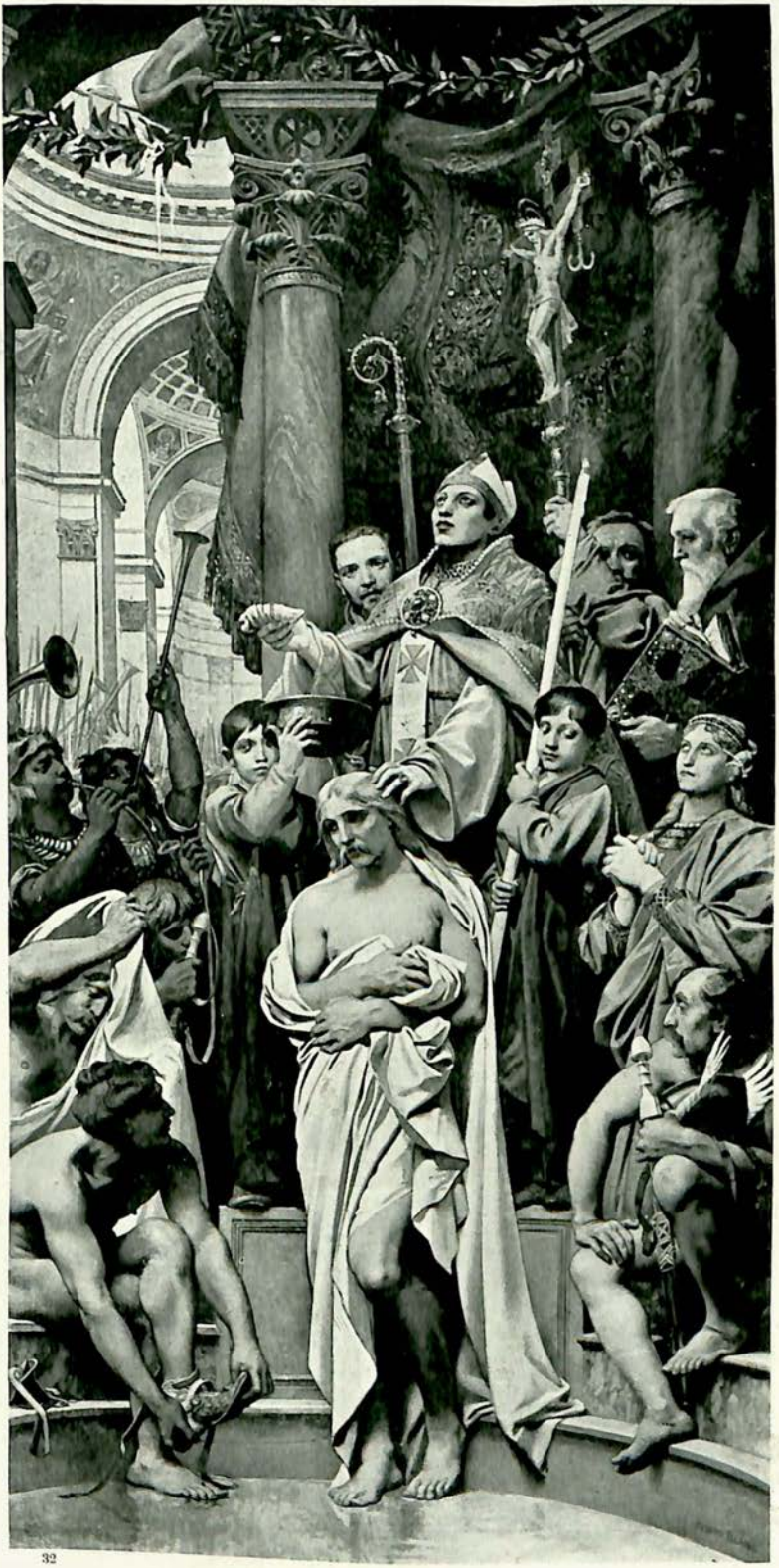
in western Europe. Among these he tried to gain a kind of primacy by such politic means as marrying the women of his family to foreign princes, in the design of forming a league of alliance. He himself married a daughter of Clovis, king of the Franks, fast growing to be the greatest of all these new powers. But his desire of peace did not keep him out of two wars, one with the Eastern empire, to teach it how he could hold his own, and another with Clovis, which makes a pregnant episode in history.

As Arians, the Visigoth kings of Toulouse had not got on well with their Catholic subjects, who would have looked for deliverance to the advancing power of Clovis on the north but for this king being a heathen, who might prove more oppressive than a heretic. In A.D. 496, Clovis, converted through his wife, Clotilda of Burgundy, let himself be baptized by a Catholic bishop;[1] and by his clergy the overthrowing of Arian neighbours was urged on him as a religious duty, one too congenial to his unscrupulous ambition. He began by attacking his brother-in-law, king of the Burgunds; then, forcing them into alliance, in A.D. 507 he declared war upon the Visigoth king, Alaric. His Goths had so far lost their martial temper that the great want of the king in this emergency is stated to have been money to pay soldiers. He was conquered and slain by Clovis, who added the bulk of Alaric's kingdom to his own as the foundation of modern France. Theodoric sent help too late, but was able to save for Alaric's son a district in the south of France, where also he managed to extend his own dominion. Most of the Visigoths crossed the Pyrenees to hold a kingdom in Spain till the coming of the Moors.

Fortunate through most of his career, Theodoric earned deep obloquy at its close. It may be that he was provoked by ingratitude of his Roman subjects, between whom and the Goths he had tried to hold the balance even; perhaps his mind was clouded by the infirmities of old age. Intrigues with the emperor at Constantinople stirred him into a fit of angry suspicion, in which he forbade all Romans to own any weapon but a small knife. On a charge of treason he wreaked his wrath against some of the Roman nobles, among them the aged Symmachus, author and high official, with his more famous son-in-law, the king's former friend and favourite, Boethius, who, lying in prison at Pavia under sentence of death, was there able almost to finish his celebrated *Consolations of Philosophy*.

Boethius, "the last of the philosophers", has been claimed as a Christian martyr, but it is doubtful if he were a Christian at all, his supposed treatise on the Trinity not being so well authenticated as his translation of Aristotle. In the celebrated prison book that was the swan-song of classic learning, he does not mention Christ; his allusions are drawn from Homer and Ovid, not from the Scriptures; and there is nothing beyond Cicero's morality in his conclusion: "Abhor vices,

[1] This king's conversion also, legend precipitates by means of miraculous aid in battle; and his wife's people are said to have embraced the Roman faith on consideration that with it went victory.





THE BAPTISM OF CLOVIS

*From the mural painting by Joseph Blanc in the Panthéon, Paris*

practise virtues, raise your minds to good hopes, address your humble prayers to heaven"; yet here and there it would seem as if devout paganism had been touched by Christian fervour. Wanting in orthodox doctrine as it is, the *Consolations of Philosophy*, written alternately in prose and verse, had a strong appeal for the Middle Ages, often translated, as by Chaucer, and imitated rather by our own King Alfred, in whose version, re-translated into modern English, the book is perhaps best known to our generation.

Here ended the great Latin literature inspired by gods of Olympus and philosophies of Greece, that yet did not become a dead letter. The early Christians frowned at works of human intellect, which they could not neglect when art and letters came into the service of a Church no longer humble and simple-minded. Its Fathers were fain to spoil their Egyptians of treasures of instruction that bore a pagan stamp. St. Augustine confesses that he was roused to thoughtfulness by Cicero and Plato. St. Jerome could not help quoting the classics he denounced as unprofitable for salvation. St. Ambrose imitated the *De Officiis* of Cicero. St. Gregory had no great love for literature, but he allowed that the ploughshares of Israel might be sharpened at Philistine forges. Virgil, whose fourth *Eclogue* was pressed into theological service for a prophecy of the Messiah, came down to Dante's age as a kind of morganatic saint. So the Church adopted those ancient scriptures as only inferior to its own, and by the hands of monkish copyists handed them on to the Renaissance, though many valuable writings were obliterated to make palimpsests for legends of the darker ages.

The Church also suffered in Theodoric's lapse from the equitable tenor of his reign. The emperor Justin exasperated him by decreeing from Constantinople that Arian churches everywhere should be reconsecrated to the Catholic faith. Pope John, himself a Catholic, was sent as ambassador to demand the recall of this edict, and, though successful in his mission, on his return the king threw him into prison as suspected of having invited the emperor to invade Italy. So hot was Theodoric that he now undid the chief work of his life by forbidding the Catholic worship all over his dominion. But before this edict could be carried out he died, A.D. 526. Orthodox theologians took his death for a judgment, and had visions of his soul hurled into the hell-mouth crater of Stromboli; others told how his last hours were scared by the head of Symmachus appearing at his board as Banquo to Macbeth. Minstrels of a future age did more justice to his early renown; and as Attila became the Etzel of the Nibelungenlied, Theodoric of Verona was transformed into that Diedrich of Bern who plays an heroic part in German legends, wildly confused as to place and time, yet so not unaptly representing an obscure chaos of semi-barbarous struggles from which would emerge the kingdoms of Europe.

The strength and the glory of Rome, indeed, had been sucked away beyond the Alps. Superstitious pagans, remembering the twelve vultures that appeared to Romulus, saw in them a presage that his

city would endure but for the twelve centuries now expired since its mythical foundation. As a spiritual power it was to take a new life, in which its renown became so richly embalmed that some thousand years later Petrarch would be proud of a laureate crown, and Montaigne of the empty honour of Roman citizenship bestowed by what was still styled a Roman Senate. But henceforth the beginnings of modern history must be looked for among the peoples hitherto scorned, even when feared, as barbarians.

## CHAPTER XI

# Justinian (A.D. 482–565)

Even an erudite student of history can hardly recall the names of all the emperors who for nearly a thousand years held their shaken thrones in the East, most of them indeed worthy to be forgotten. Macaulay himself, who declared that any fool could say his Archbishops of Canterbury backwards, might have stuck in the long list of those successive dynasties traced for us by the patient labour of Gibbon's *Decline and Fall.* Here and there a name stands out in that tangled story of crime, folly, and misfortune. The most notable of the early Eastern emperors coming forward to fill the scene at the death of Theodoric was Justinian, who owes the best part of his fame to what was done by other men in his name.

Like so many other masters of the world in this age, Justinian was a peasant of the Danube by birth, succeeding his uncle Justin, a soldier raised in old age by courage or cunning to a short reign, though, as is said to have been the case with his contemporary, Theodoric, this brawny guardsman could not read or write. Justinian was more accomplished, and had the name of being a pillar of the orthodox faith now dominant at Constantinople; so in A.D. 527 he ascended with applause the throne he would hold for nearly forty years. He seems to have had natural good qualities that deteriorated through the effect of power upon a vain and weak nature. He was abstemious and industrious, of the narrow mind and ungenerous heart that may turn a cleverish scholar into a pedant and a bigot; and his meticulous zeal for religion made an unedifying contrast with the mean and even base actions recorded against him. Many of his ill-doings can be laid to the charge of his notorious wife Theodora, an actress and prostitute, who so bewitched the emperor that he made her his consort in the government, which she infected by her cruelty, rapacity, and malignity, indulged to such a point that whispered hatred branded her as a devil in human shape. Her Christianity was tainted with the monophysite heresy, which may have set orthodox chroniclers on painting her blacker than she was. But she had an active and resolute mind to be the complement of Justinian's somewhat flabby nature, worked upon also by artful and unscrupulous ministers. This emperor was no man of war, yet he willingly sought conquests carried out without risking his own skin; and he was lucky in the service of more than one great general to fill his reign with drum-and-trumpet history.

It would have been hard for the mildest prince to govern here

without violent acts. A feature of the time was extraordinary excitement over the circus races by which the authorities were still bound to amuse idle citizens, now that gladiatorial contests had been dying out before Christian morality. The clamour of our elections and football matches is faint compared to the partisan feeling roused by those spectacles, in which the colours displayed were white, red, blue and green, as representing the seasons, or else the four elements. At Rome the blue and green liveries had become standards of passion stronger than any public spirit. Cassiodorus tells scornfully how, as the green or the blue won a race, half the city went mad with triumph and half was plunged in despair, all worked up by such idle contests as if the safety of the country were at stake.

The same fever was carried to other large cities of the empire, to rage at Constantinople still more hotly. The citizens took sides as Blues or Greens with such rancorous fury that once at a festival the Green faction slew 3000 of the Blues, it is said, with stones and daggers which they had brought hidden in baskets of fruit. Here these rival colours became badges also of politics and religion: the animosity appears to have sprung up as between hostile sections of the population. Anastasius, the emperor before Justin, had favoured the Greens; but Justinian patronized the Blues, who supposed themselves to be zealous for the orthodox faith. On coming to the throne he had promised to punish impartially the disorders caused by their reciprocal fury, but, under the influence of Theodora, examples were made rather of Green than of Blue disturbers of the peace; and the latter faction attracted dissolute young men, "hooligans" of the period, who made partisanship an excuse for filling the streets of Constantinople with robbery and murder.

After a few years the quarrel rose to a head in the Hippodrome, in presence of the emperor, against whom the Greens burst into loud accusations of injustice, and in vain he tried to silence them. The riot spread over the city, inflamed by the condemnation of several murderers, some of whom were rescued by their partisans. A raging mob of both parties broke into the prisons, overcame the guards, fought with barbarian soldiers in the streets, set on fire at several points, so that many churches and palaces were burned with enormous loss of property. Respectable citizens took flight over the Bosphorus, giving up the city for nearly a week to the rioters, whose cry *Nika* (Vanquish) supplied a name for this destructive insurrection. From a riot indeed it had nearly become a revolution, when even the troops showed doubtful fidelity to their master. The Greens dragged forth Hypatius, nephew of their former patron Anastasius, and, in spite of his entreaties, insisted on proclaiming him emperor. Justinian, shut up in his palace-fortress, after parleying with the rebels and vainly seeking to appease them by the dismissal of unpopular officials, was on the point of taking flight by water; but the sterner spirit of Theodora held him to his post. It seems that the Blues presently repented of that mad sedition, evidently turning to the profit of their

THE CHARIOT RACE. From the painting by Prof. Alexander Wagner in the Manchester City Art Gallery.

The picture represents an exciting finish of a chariot race at Rome in the time of Domitian, and displays considerable archæological learning and research. It was painted in 1876, and was bequeathed to the Manchester Gallery in 1898. The reproduction is published by permission of the Corporation of Manchester.

Alexander Wagner, a historical and genre painter, born at Budapest in 1838, was trained under Piloty at Munich, and has been since 1866 Professor of Painting in the Academy at Munich.

adversaries, who had gathered in the Hippodrome round the reluctant usurper. There they were attacked by a body of the imperial guard under its captain, Belisarius, who, making way through the smoky and crumbling streets, burst open the gates of the Hippodrome to fall like wolves upon the crowd huddled up within. The slaughter then executed by 3000 veterans, and by the Blues recovering from their temporary suppression, is put at from 30,000 to 50,000, in any case was so enormous as to drown the *émeute* in blood. The new-made emperor and his brother were carried before Justinian for merciless execution among a score of other prominent men suspected as traitors. The Hippodrome was closed for several years as a rebuke to the insolent factions that yet long continued to disturb the capital.

The chief actor in this sanguinary scene was to prove the glory of Justinian's time. Belisarius, a Thracian or Illyrian by birth, had enlisted in the imperial guards, and, while still young, rose to military distinction. In the two former reigns the Persian king had humiliated the empire to such a point that Justin was almost driven to grasp at peace on condition of adopting his enemy's son Chosroes as his heir, an arrangement that might have brought about the union of these two greatest powers. Belisarius, appointed governor of the important fortress of Dara on the Mesopotamian frontier, then commander of the army in the East, won a signal victory over the Persians, and though he lost another battle on the Euphrates, the death of the Persian king brought the rival states to a temporary accommodation.

The thus accredited general returned to Constantinople to rise in esteem with Justinian. This he owed in part to his wife Antonina, like Theodora a woman of low birth and shameless morals but masterful character, who, taken into favour by the empress, for a time played the same part as did the Duchess of Marlborough at the court of Queen Anne. The Marlborough of Justinian's reign owes much of his renown to another member of his household, his secretary, Procopius, who followed him on his campaigns to leave an account of them as our chief authority for this period. We cannot indeed depend on all he tells us, for his work consists of three different and sometimes contradictory parts. First, he wrote the story of the wars in which his master shines above the inactive and jealous Justinian. Then, to gain a favour that seemed more profitable, he wrote another book of *Edifices*, filled with flatteries of the emperor, his text being the many churches and other public buildings on which Justinian lavished the wealth wrung from his subjects. Lastly, there was brought out under his name a scandalous collection of *Secret Anecdotes*, that, if authentic, shows the spiteful baseness of a disappointed dependent, who laid himself out to blacken the characters of both patrons. But, when all testimony is weighed, Belisarius stands forth as a champion too noble for that rotten state, himself not without faults, the most serious of them a subservience like his master's to a wicked wife.

The next scene of his prowess was Africa, the modern Tunis and Algeria. Out of the way of Roman civil wars, this province had

thriven under the empire, and was then so fertile as to make, along with Egypt, the chief grain supply of Italy, even before its own ravaged fields fell out of cultivation. Carthage had been restored as flourishing capital of the province; and the remains of other cities now lost in deserts and mountain forests show how this land was once overspread by Roman civilization. Notable among them stood Hippo (Bona) the bishopric of St. Augustine, himself an African by birth. But in his time a so rich domain was conquered by the Vandals from Spain, who to the insolence of barbarous warriors added the affliction of persecuting Arianism. Gaiseric, whom we have seen plundering Rome, gave the Barbary coast an ill repute for piracy. With a strong fleet ready to swoop down on any shores where he might gather booty, he had made head against the power of the empire, and died after a long rule, firmly fixed upon the oppressed natives. Now his feebler descendant, Hilperic, came to be overthrown by his own kinsman, Gelimer, against whose tyranny the beaten party invited Justinian's interference; then orthodox zeal, vanity, and ambition supplied mingled motives deciding him to support the Catholic cause in Africa. His general policy, indeed, was an attempt to bring back the dismembered Roman empire under the power of that New Rome on the Bosphorus.

Not without opposition in the emperor's councils was it settled that in A.D. 533 Belisarius should lead to Carthage a fleet transporting 15,000 soldiers, many of them such Huns, Heruli, and Isaurians from the East as now made the strength of a so-called Roman army. Justinian's chief minister, John of Cappadocia, had been against the expedition, thanks to whose rascality it was provisioned with ill-baked biscuit and water that went bad, so that sickness soon broke out among the men. But they got safe to Sicily, from which, having reconnoitred the opposite coast, Belisarius landed in Africa, three months after leaving Constantinople.

The Vandals were taken by surprise, Gelimer being absent from Carthage, and the flower of his army shipped off to subdue Sardinia. The African inhabitants welcomed the invaders when it was found that the strict discipline of Belisarius restrained them from pillage. The Gothic oppressors, trusting to their fleet, had neglected or destroyed the fortifications of cities; so without delay Belisarius could march along the coast upon Carthage. After one engagement, he entered the capital, to the joy of the Catholics, while the Arian Vandals took sanctuary in the churches. There, joined by his fleet, he made haste to restore the ruined walls as defence against a large army Gelimer had now gathered. But most of the usurper's troops were unwilling auxiliaries, and the Vandal warriors had grown slack through three generations of luxurious domination. In a decisive battle Gelimer fled shamefully, to be hunted down till he surrendered as a suppliant. All Africa, with the islands dependent on it, fell to the emperor, whose generals were presently able to reconquer part of Spain.

When news of that victory reached Constantinople, Justinian grati-

fied his vain-glorious pride by assuming high-sounding titles as if he had achieved this conquest by his own hand; and he ordered Carthage to be renamed Justinia, a name that stuck to none of the score of cities on which it was successively fixed. In his petty suspicion he listened to discontented subordinates of the conqueror, accused as scheming to set up for king of Africa; but Belisarius proved his loyalty by hastening back with his trophies. He was allowed the honour of a triumph, in which, however, he walked on foot, leading to the throne of Justinian and Theodora a train of captives, among them Gelimer, who is reported as mournfully repeating the words attributed to a more fortunate monarch: "Vanity, vanity, all is vanity!" He was allowed to retire into private life with the gift of an estate; the Vandal prisoners were enlisted in the Roman service; and the rest of the nation became gradually absorbed in the mixed population of Africa, among whom Justinian had the satisfaction of restoring his Catholic faith. To Jerusalem he now gave back the golden spoils of the Temple, taken from Rome by Gaiseric, and destined yet again to be booty for Moslem plunderers.

The Goths of Italy had furthered this expedition against their distant kinsmen, but they were soon to learn how it whetted the emperor's appetite for conquest. He had been intriguing for recognition as overlord of Italy, and the affairs of that country now gave him good excuse for interference. Theodoric had left it in the hands of his widowed daughter Amalasuntha as regent for her young son Athalaric. But the rude Goths were restless under a woman's rule, the more so as the queen showed sympathy with the Romans, and would have brought up her boy to be a cultured prince rather than a warrior chief. So insecure was her government that she proposed to take refuge at Constantinople, yet managed to recover her ascendency for a moment by cutting off the heads of the opposition. Then her son died young, having broken away from her control into precocious drunkenness, and the queen's position became more unstable than ever. She saw best to associate with herself, as king, Theodoric's nephew Theodahad, a treacherous coward who had been secretly negotiating with Constantinople to oust her. He presently had her imprisoned and killed, a crime which has been guessed at as instigated by the jealous empress, Theodora; but Justinian took the opportunity to come forward as Amalasuntha's avenger, and declared war against the Gothic power in Italy (A.D. 535).

At the outset of a war which would last twenty years, so hard pressed was the military strength of the empire that it was with less than ten thousand men Belisarius sailed, ostensibly for Carthage, but with orders to land in Sicily, while a smaller force attacked the outposts of the Gothic kingdom in Dalmatia. Finding himself received by the Sicilians as a deliverer from the Goths, the Roman general overran the island, delayed only by the garrison of Palermo, which he overcame through the device of mooring his ships close to the walls and hoisting on the masts boats filled with archers to command the defences. This

rapid conquest scared the cowardly Theodahad into offering submission; but he took a more defiant tone when the Dalmatian attack miscarried.

All pretences thrown aside, Belisarius, after a hasty visit to Africa to quell a sedition there, crossed into Calabria, and, like Garibaldi more than thirteen centuries later, advanced without a check to Naples. Here he was at much pains to persuade the inhabitants to admit him, being anxious to spare the city the horrors of a sack. But part of the people backed the Gothic garrison in refusing surrender, and it is said that the Jews fought bravely for the defence, in memory of what they owed Theodoric, or in dread of renewed persecution. The city was strongly fortified, but the besiegers found a way through a blocked-up aqueduct, by which a few hundred men crept within the walls, and let their comrades burst in for scenes of violence which the general exerted himself to restrain with a spirit novel in warfare. Some of the garrison joined his ranks, as did other Goths in the south of Italy, where Belisarius now stood master.

This loss excited the Goths to choose the tried warrior, Witigis, as their king, Theodahad being deposed and presently murdered. Witigis, who strengthened his title by marrying the daughter of Amalasuntha, was braver than wise, and no match for an adversary now proved the great captain of his age. The Gothic army fell back upon Ravenna, leaving Rome unprotected. Their king called to his aid Franks, Alemans, and Burgunds from the other side of the Alps; but before he could gather an army he heard how Belisarius was in Rome, having been invited there by the Pope and the Senators, heedless of oaths of allegiance extorted from them by the Goths before their retreat. The Romans were hardly satisfied with their new governor when they found him strengthening the fortifications of the city in preparation for a siege, while, as if to challenge the enemy, he pushed out victorious expeditions against Tuscan cities. Having at last got together his reinforcements from Gaul, Witigis led 150,000 men against Rome, hoping there to catch the small army of Belisarius as shut up in a trap.

But the great fortified city proved too hard a nut for those wild warriors to crack. The siege lasted a year, with thrilling vicissitudes, related for us by Procopius, who was shut up with his master, as was also the wife of Belisarius. He had at first only 5000 soldiers to man the walls, more than a dozen miles in circuit; and not much trust could be placed in the services of the effeminate Romans. The Goths, occupying stockaded camps about the fortifications, could not completely invest them, for more than once Belisarius got in reinforcements from Constantinople, and was able to make dashing sallies. The besiegers showed some advance from mere savage warfare when by trains of oxen they dragged up huge towers and battering-rams to the attack; but, the oxen being killed by arrows, these unwieldy machines stuck useless before the walls, to be burned by the defenders, while the better-served Roman artillery hurled bolts, stones, and other missiles with destructive effect. An assault upon Hadrian's Tomb was repulsed

Photos. Alinari

TWO OF THE FAMOUS MOSAICS (SIXTH CENTURY) IN THE CHURCH OF S. VITALE, RAVENNA

Upper Panel: The Emperor Justinian with the Bishop Maximian and attendants.

Lower Panel: The Empress Theodora with the Ladies of her Court.

by pulling down the statues which adorned it, to crush the stormers in the ditch below. Thirty thousand Goths are said to have been slain in this one onset; after which Witigis was driven to the more uncongenial tactics of a patient blockade. The besieged for their part grew so confident that they urged Belisarius, against his own judgment, to an attack in force outside the walls, in which he was driven back with loss. Inside the city he governed with such a high hand as to depose and exile the Pope on a charge of treason.

The Goths at last closed the southern approaches by which he had got in supplies; and food ran short in the city, though the women, children, and slaves had been sent away as useless mouths. The aqueducts also had been broken down, drying up the baths, become almost a necessity to luxurious Romans, who had still the Tiber to save them from thirst. But the Goths themselves were ill off for provisions, and decimated by fever in the unhealthy country round Rome, which already began to go out of cultivation. A report of a large army on the way to relieve the city set them on negotiations, offering to yield Sicily to Belisarius, who ironically proposed to give up Britain in return. He declared himself unable to come to terms without the emperor's consent, and a three months' truce was agreed on to let Gothic envoys visit Constantinople. Foreseeing that the enemy would not remain quiet so long, Belisarius sent off to some distance 2000 horsemen under a captain fitly named John the Sanguinary, with orders how to act if the truce should be broken. The faithless Goths did break the truce by more than one attempt upon the city; then John was let loose upon the country behind them, pushing victoriously up to Rimini on the Adriatic, of which he took possession, invited by the Roman inhabitants. When Witigis heard of a fortress so near his own stronghold, Ravenna, being in the hands of the enemy, he broke up the siege and fell back, his retreat pressed by Belisarius in a dashing sally.

The way in which most of the country now lay open to this able general is shown by his sending orders, ahead of the enemy's disheartened host, for John to abandon Rimini and make himself useful elsewhere. But that bloodthirsty captain, disposed to slaughter for his own hand, stuck to his acquisition, and stood a siege that cost the Goths further loss. The difficulties of the commander were hardly lessened by the arrival of an imperial army at Ancona, sent to reinforce him. It was led by the eunuch Narses, a favourite chamberlain of Justinian, who had instructions to use his own judgment, and came less as a subordinate than as a colleague for Belisarius, if not as a spy upon his suspected ambition. The counsels of the Roman leaders being divided, though they succeeded in relieving Rimini they let Milan fall into the hands of the enemy, that butchered the whole male population and carried off the women as slaves. This loss of the second city of Italy was a lesson to Justinian, who recalled Narses, leaving Belisarius once more in sole command. But he could not hinder Theodabert, king of the Franks, from bursting into the north

of Italy with a huge host of plunderers, soon, however, retiring from a raid that dismayed the Goths as well as the Italians.

South of the Po the only place that still held out against Belisarius was Ravenna, in which he had beleaguered Witigis, when Justinian, without consulting his general, sent envoys to offer the Goths peace on better terms than they could expect. But they doubted the emperor's promises unless Belisarius signed the treaty. On his refusing to be a party to it, Witigis and all chose rather to offer the kingdom of Italy to the conqueror whom they had learned to trust and respect. Belisarius would not give up his loyalty to Justinian, as he might have safely done; yet, taking a council of his officers into confidence, he toyed with the proposal so far as to be admitted into Ravenna, where it is said that on seeing his small-statured soldiers, made so formidable by discipline, the Gothic women spat in the faces of their brawny kinsmen as having let themselves be beaten by such pygmies. Belisarius relieved the starving inhabitants, maintained order, dismissed the Gothic soldiery unhurt, and in general acted as if he meant to accept the kingship. But this was all a pretence; or if he were tempted to set up for himself, on being summoned to Constantinople by Justinian, he at once obeyed, heedless of the indignant reproaches of the Goths, left to fresh struggles for freedom under a hastily-chosen king. Witigis was carried off into honourable captivity (A.D. 540), and settled on an estate in Asia in return for giving up his Arian creed. Many of the stalwart captives took service among the personal guards of Belisarius, said at this time to number 7000 men, and he seems to have been now possessed of great wealth that might well fall to the general of such a conquest.

So ended the first war of Belisarius in Italy, notable not only for his almost unbroken victories against odds, but for the new spirit of humanity he brought into warfare. His soldiers were for the most part half-tamed barbarians, yet he kept them in such strict discipline that where they passed along the old Roman roads not a cornfield was trodden down, not an apple missing from the trees, so the saying went. Just, temperate, chaste, and simple of life, he was the idol of this rough soldiery. Treating the helpless country people kindly, he also won the hearts of the warriors he so often defeated; and had he chosen to throw off allegiance to the emperor, he might have fixed himself in Italy as firmly as Theodoric. This praise, indeed, depends mainly on the statements of his chronicling secretary, who was capable of not telling the whole truth; and Antonina, also a comrade of his Italian campaigns, was the wife to enrich him by rapacity which he could not or would not restrain.

Recalled at the height of his fame, and in the prime of life, Belisarius got scanty honour or reward from Justinian, whose jealousy did not fail to be excited by the popular admiration of that hero. But the emperor could not well afford to quarrel with so loyal a servant and so excellent a general. On all sides the state was shaken by assaults. New hordes of barbarous enemies swarmed from the East,

among whom the Turks are now first heard of. From the North appeared an army of Long-bearded Teutons, destined to occupy the land called from them Lombardy. The elaborate fortifications erected by Justinian along the Danube did not avail to keep out irruptions, which he was fain to stave off by setting the barbarian tribes to fight against each other. In Africa, once Belisarius turned his back on it, an Arian insurrection had brought about ten years of civil war to begin the fall of that once-flourishing province into the sterility from which it is now being rescued by modern conquerors. And the empire's most formidable foe was Chosroes, king of Persia for almost half a century, who in the year Belisarius withdrew from Italy had been able to ravage Syria unchecked, and to ruin the great city of Antioch, left unprotected by an army shirking this point of danger.

Next year (A.D. 541) Belisarius was sent back to his old post on the Euphrates, but only after a delay apparently caused by suspicion of his success balanced against fear of the Persian. He found the Eastern army undisciplined and ill equipped, the officers insubordinate; and the climate told severely on the barbarians pressed into his service. With scanty resources, he could win no great advantage; but his very presence drew off Chosroes from an invasion of Colchis, the land of the Golden Fleece, at the eastern end of the Euxine, whence he might have swooped upon Constantinople. Twice was Belisarius recalled after holding the great king in check; then, during his absence, the Roman arms underwent fresh humiliations; but when he again appeared in the field the Persians were driven to retreat. Chosroes was aiming at the conquest of Jerusalem, now grown rich through a concourse of Christian pilgrims; but he durst not advance upon it with such an adversary left behind him. The war died out for a time, rather than was brought to an end, amid a terrible outburst of plague in Asia, which spread also to Europe. No one in those days could guess how tiny insects, carrying germs of disease, were more deadly enemies than the fiercest warriors.

Now came to a head the domestic troubles that had a baneful effect on the great general's career. The story of his wife's worst crime is somewhat obscure, but has been outlined by Procopius as follows. So far back as the African war she had a guilty intrigue with the young Theodosius, to whom Belisarius had shown special favour as a sort of godson. Some years later their treachery came to be revealed to him by a maidservant, but so strong was Antonina's influence over an uxorious husband that she persuaded him of her innocence, and was allowed to inflict a cruel death on the witnesses against her. Theodosius, having taken flight, was brought back; but some years later, perhaps as afraid of his exacting paramour as of his wronged patron, he became a monk at Ephesus. Then Antonina gave herself and him no peace till he came to Constantinople, where she now lived in close intercourse with Theodora, no longer following the deceived general on his campaigns. She had been able to do a service to the empress Theodora in ridding her of the minister, John of Cappadocia, her rival in

directing Justinian's wavering mind. He is understood to have had an eye to making himself emperor; and Antonina appears to have fooled him with a promise of her husband's aid in usurpation, then betrayed him by letting the emperor's officers overhear their secret confabulations. John managed to escape death by taking sanctuary in a church, but he had to go into retirement as a monk, two novel incidents of history that would be often repeated at Constantinople.

Theodora could now repay this base obligation in kind. Photius, Antonina's son by a former marriage, had long ago quarrelled with her lover Theodosius, and fallen into her unnatural hate. Either out of resentment, or shame for his mother's shamelessness, in the course of the Persian war he made her infamy clear to Belisarius, who at length was moved to punish both the guilty parties. Then Theodora interfered, summoning them all to Constantinople, where Theodosius, treated as a guest, soon died; but Photius was thrown into a dungeon and cruelly tortured. He is said to have escaped thrice, twice to be torn out of sanctuary; but at length he got away to Jerusalem, there becoming a monk, and dying an abbot. Such was the justice administered under an emperor who undertook to reform the law, and such the degradation of a religion that now offered an asylum for crime as well as misfortune.

Belisarius was slow to condone his wife's guilt at Theodora's bidding; and soon he gave the empress fresh cause of displeasure. Justinian falling ill, his general probably made no secret of being ready to oppose the succession of his unworthy consort to the throne. He was recalled from the East in disgrace, heavily fined, deprived of his guards, and had to submit to the humiliation of being pardoned for no crime more manifest than loyalty and honourable service. Under these depressing circumstances he appears to have become reconciled with Antonina, proving again as submissive a husband as was Justinian to Theodora. History shows many such instances in which strong as well as weak men were dominated by artful women; but the scandals that spice the dubious annals of this period might as well be forgotten for the credit of human nature.

The corrupt court of Constantinople could not long do without its well-tried champion. The Gothic power had again raised head against the inefficient leaders of the imperial army, till they saw nothing for it but to propose withdrawing from Italy, when Belisarius was sent to resume the command there. After getting rid of two successors to Witigis, the Goths had elected as their king the young prince Totila, who soon justified the choice, though he seems to have been intriguing to join the Romans when thus turned into their resolute enemy. He proved himself not only a just and merciful ruler, but an able general, a match for Belisarius, hampered as the great general now was by want of forces and by the bad discipline of his predecessors, so that after five years fresh campaigning the Goths were still unsubdued.

Totila, having already taken Naples, laid siege to Rome, hoping to starve it out. Dreadful were the sufferings of the inhabitants, till the governor Bessas, himself a Goth in the emperor's service, sent them

away to take their chance of being killed by the enemy or of famishing in the devastated Campagna. With an army of relief Belisarius landed at the Tiber mouth and tried to throw supplies into the city, but failed, partly through the disobedience of his subordinates, and partly through alarm for his wife, again his companion in war, whom he had left behind at the port, and retreated on a false report of its being lost: for the first time in that hero's life, confesses his chronicler, he was struck by panic. Next, he fell ill, and while he lay on a sickbed the gates of Rome were opened to the Goths by treachery (A.D. 546). Totila exerted himself to save the lives of the captives, but the city was once more given up to plunder; then a little later, provoked by Justinian refusing to treat with him, he talked of burning Rome to the ground and turning its site into a sheepwalk. An eloquent letter of appeal from Belisarius availed to prevent such truly Gothic destruction; yet before marching away Totila threw down the walls and sent off the few people still left in Rome, which for several weeks remained deserted, like the desolate Campagna stretching from its gates.

Presently Belisarius retook the city, hurriedly repairing the fortifications, so that he was able to keep out another attack of the Goths. But it looks as if he had lost heart; and Totila, too, must have lost prestige among his own people by failing to hold Rome. The war dragged on indecisively till A.D. 549, when Belisarius went back to Constantinople, this time apparently at his own desire. About the same time Theodora died, removing from Justinian's side the evil genius of his reign, while it seems that Antonina still sullied the fame of her husband by a grasping at wealth that in her later years took the place of profligacy. Belisarius himself, indeed, is accused of covetousness in this stage of his career.

The next general sent against Italy was the emperor's nephew, Germanus, a promising prince no longer in the shadow of Theodora's ill will, who also had a claim on Gothic loyalty as having married the widow of Witigis, Theodoric's granddaughter. Unluckily he died on the way; and the command was then given to the most extraordinary hero that ever led a veteran army, the dwarfish and aged eunuch, Narses, originally an Armenian captive, such as has so often risen to court favour on the Bosphorus. Made nervous by plots against his life, Justinian probably chose him for general as incapable of aspiring to the throne; and we saw how he had already been sent as a spy on the suspected ambition of Belisarius. But the eunuch turned out a skilful and resourceful commander, none the less for not venturing on such rash displays of personal prowess as endeared Belisarius to his troops. Belisarius had not commanded so well equipped an army, largely enlisted from frontier barbarians, as Narses led round the head of the Adriatic, coming to Ravenna without a check.

Totila, meanwhile, had again taken Rome, in which he tried to revive the pomp of the Cæsars, offering vassalage to Justinian, to be contemptuously rejected. Having gathered his forces he marched out to meet Narses on the Flaminian way, for a battle that should

decide the fate of Italy. At Tadino they stood facing one another in idle negotiations. Narses rode through his ranks attended by men holding aloft golden ornaments he destined as prizes of valour. Totila, in purple and gold, pranced in front of the Goths throwing his spear in the air to catch it again, with other feats of circus horsemanship, as Procopius sneeringly observed. Late in the day he made a sudden onset on the Roman army, but found it ready for him. The Goths fought despairingly till it was dark, then fled in rout, Totila falling among the fugitives. Narses pushed on to Rome, which he captured after a short siege, both city and country suffering fresh horrors at the hands of soldiers no longer restrained by the discipline of Belisarius.

Retiring to Pavia, the Goths chose Totila's lieutenant Teias as their king, who would have bought the aid of the Franks with gold laid up in this fortress of theirs. He led his army southwards to save Cumæ, on the Bay of Naples, where Totila's brother guarded another treasure of the Gothic kingdom. Attacked by Narses, Teias entrenched himself on a height about Vesuvius, till want of food forced him to a desperate onset in which he was killed, and his followers surrendered on condition of being allowed to leave Italy (A.D. 553).

In vain had Teias appealed to the Franks; they preferred to fight on their own account for a country that would soon lie an easy prey. When only a few Gothic garrisons held out, a host of Franks and Alemans poured over the Alps and ravaged to the farther end of the peninsula. All through the winter Narses had to watch this invasion; but while he repaired his crippled forces the barbarians were dying of the plague, or through the drunkenness they could now indulge freely; some of them no doubt made off homewards with their booty. They were still superior in mere numbers when next year Narses beat them out of Italy, this victory celebrated, for the last time, by a triumph at Rome. Having completed the conquest of the whole country, he fixed himself at Ravenna, with the title of Exarch, now denoting the emperor's Italian viceroy (A.D. 554).

Terrible must have been the sufferings of Italy during that twenty years' war. Rome, taken and retaken five times, lost almost all its population. The ruthless soldiery, sometimes deserting from one side to the other, spread havoc among the plundered countryfolk, and famine followed their ruinous marches. At an early stage of the war, in one province alone, Procopius reckons that 50,000 persons died of hunger, or of rash gorging when they came by food. Dogs, mice, and weeds were greedily devoured; acorns were ground into bread. Some wretches took to cannibalism. The survivors wandered about as living skeletons, a wild-beast glare in their eyes, their bodies dried and blackened like "burned-out torches" or "spectres of humanity". Corpses were found on their knees, dead in the effort to pull up some handful of herbs, or with a mouthful of nettles they had not strength to swallow. The dead lay unburied, too lean a prey to tempt even kites and vultures. In some places the crops grew ripe with no hands

to reap them; and fresh fields fell out of cultivation, as had been going on for long in many parts of Italy, which has not yet healed her soil from that corruption.

Starvation bred disease to multiply such misery. On the top of all came the plague, spreading from the East, where it was naturally most destructive, and after raging hotly for some years, it lingered through the empire nearly half a century. Justinian's reign was also dismayed by a series of destructive earthquakes such as often in that age shook down the palaces of Constantinople; one at Antioch in A.D. 526 is said to have killed 250,000 people gathered together for a religious festival. Procopius indulges in a wild imagination of statistics that makes the loss of lives in Africa 5,000,000, and in Italy more than three times as many. On imperfect information, Gibbon declines to go far into figures; but, speaking of the plague, he finds "that, during three months, five and at length ten thousand persons died each day at Constantinople; that many cities of the East were left vacant; that in several districts of Italy the harvest and vintage withered on the ground. The triple scourge of war, pestilence, and famine afflicted the subjects of Justinian; and his reign is disgraced by a visible decrease of the human species, which has never been repaired in some of the fairest countries of the globe." This plague, indeed, made such a mark in what now ceases to be ancient history as the Black Death set on medieval Europe.

Meanwhile Belisarius had been living at Constantinople, inactive, so far as appears, but hardly at ease among the crooked ways of such a court. His occupation was gone through the timidity of his master, increasing with the weakness of an old age much given up to religious concern; an attack of plague, from which he recovered, as also the death of his masterful wife, may have gone to paralyse Justinian's early concern for the duties of a ruler. When he had secured a precarious footing for his empire in Italy, he fell back to the policy of buying off the enemies menacing him from other sides. Peace was made with Persia by payment of what was practically a tribute. The seething masses of barbarians were kept quiet for a time by embassies and subsidies, or by stirring up strife among the Slavonian tribes who were now pressing on the Danube frontier, and again and again made inroads into the Balkan peninsula, carrying away booty and captives from as far off as the Isthmus of Corinth, without meeting any resistance but in fortified cities. The army was neglected; even the imperial guard seems to have dwindled into inefficiency. The border towers and walls fell into decay, as did the Long Wall, that, extending from the Sea of Marmora to the Euxine, had for three reigns been trusted to keep safe the promontory on which Constantinople stood.

In A.D. 559 the weakness of the empire was brought home to the capital. A horde vaguely called Bulgarians, that seem to have been mainly a fragment of the Huns settled in South Russia, was led by their chief Zabergan across the frozen Danube to spread woe and terror through the Balkans, and over that crumbling Long Wall to within

20 miles of Constantinople. The scared city cried on Belisarius, who once more buckled on his armour and mustered a band of his veterans, said to have numbered only 300, mounted on horses from the Hippodrome and the imperial stables. With this trusty force as core of a rabble of ill-armed citizens and peasants he marched against Zabergan; then so skilful were his dispositions, leading up to a dashing charge, that the invaders fell back, and presently withdrew on payment of heavy ransom.

By a master more ready to deal with his enemies in gold than in iron Belisarius was restrained from following up that last exploit. While the citizens hailed him as their deliverer from the misery of a siege, he found himself coldly received at the court, Justinian looking askance always on his popularity. Not long afterwards he fell into disgrace under circumstances left obscure, as now we lose the help of the historian Procopius. It appears that he was accused of taking part in a conspiracy to cut short the emperor's decrepit life. Such guilt would be quite against the tenor of his fidelity to one whom he could have dethroned when at the height of his own renown. It is more conceivable that Justinian in his dotage gave full course to the jaundiced suspicion with which he had all along eyed that faithful servant. Tradition makes him so ungrateful as to reduce his great general to beggary, with his eyes put out; and one of the famous pictures of history shows blind Belisarius begging for an obol on the scene of his triumphs. The Oriental cruelty of incapacitating a rival by blindness now indeed became familiar at Constantinople. But considerate historians incline to reject that legend as a dramatic exaggeration of the fact that in his old age Belisarius was stripped of part of his wealth. When he died (A.D. 565) he could not have been reduced to utter poverty, if it be true that Antonina spent the rest of his property in endowing a convent to which she retired to make her much-needed peace with heaven. Her patroness Theodora in like manner had sought to buy the sort of deathbed repentance which has since left so many monuments to clashing creeds.

Justinian died soon after the general to whom he owed so much. One of the obscure intrigues of Theodora had aimed at marrying a nephew or illegitimate scion of hers to Joannina, only daughter of Belisarius, and this pair might then have been recognized as heirs to the throne; but Belisarius did not push the match, which seems another proof of his want of ambition. The emperor left several nephews, one of whom, married to a niece of Theodora, was by his friends hurried into the purple as Justin II. The next emperor, Tiberius, changed his inauspicious name for that of Constantine, which would be often ingloriously repeated through the story of the Byzantine emperors.

The profuse Justinian had been zealous in building churches of a faith he did not adorn by all his works. His still-standing monument is the vast cathedral of St. Sophia, perverted by Ottoman conquerors into their principal mosque at Constantinople. But that learned bigot left another memorial that embalms his name. Our eyes

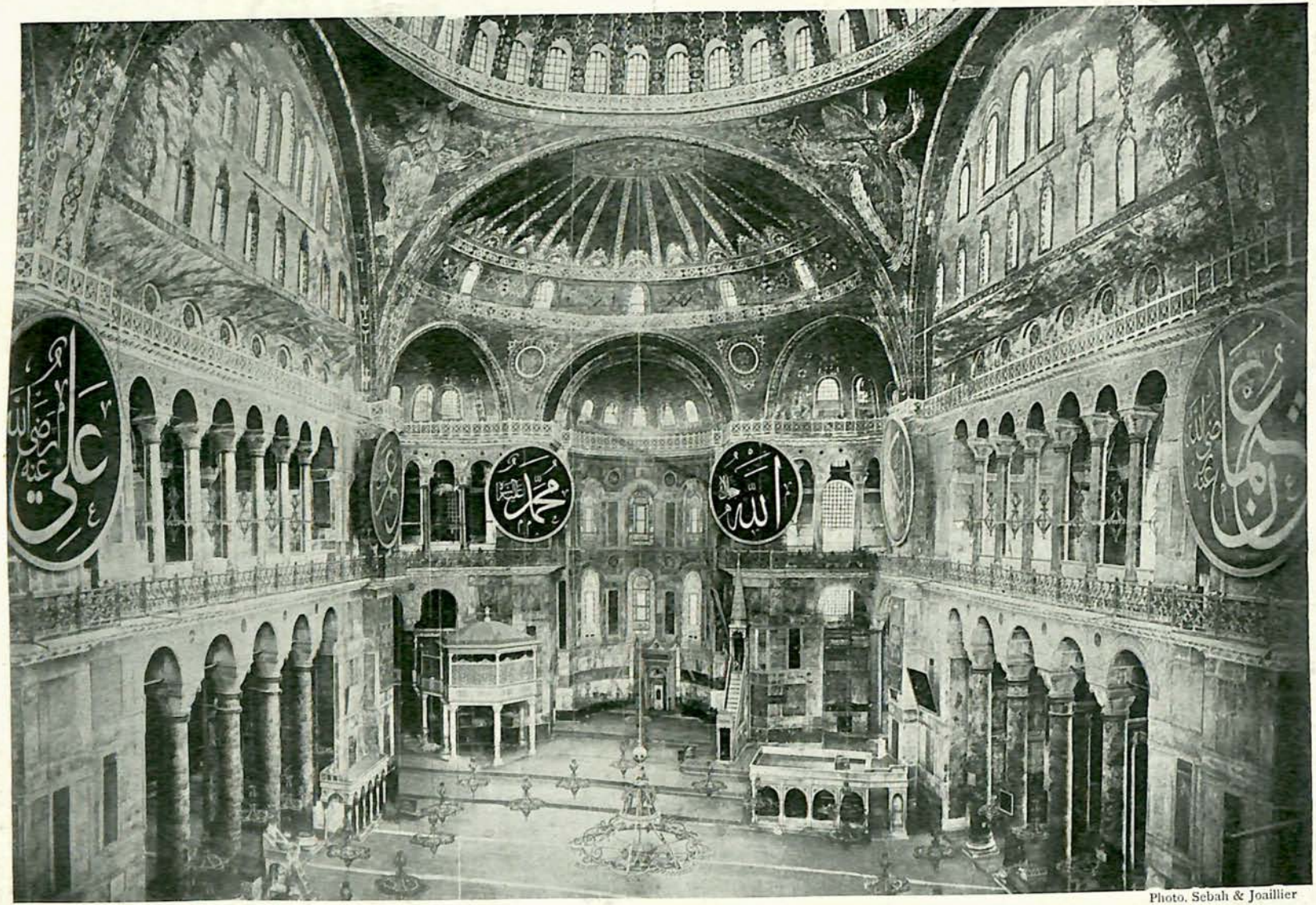



Photo. Sebah & Joaillier



INTERIOR OF ST. SOPHIA, THE GREAT CHURCH BUILT BY JUSTINIAN: NOW A TURKISH MOSQUE

have been so much turned from his throne upon the wars distracting this long reign that we have not yet looked at its main achievement. The well-informed emperor, who dogmatized on theology, persecuted heretics and pagans, closed the famous schools of Athens as mouthpieces of unbelief, abolished the time-honoured consulship as a show for needless expense, and meddled with other matters great and small, had the laudable ambition of clearing up the confusion into which the cumbrous mass of Roman law had fallen. At the outset of his reign he appointed a commission of lawyers to carry out this reform under him, as afterwards would be done in the case of the Code Napoleon. First was brought out a *Code* selected from the numerous and often contradictory enactments of his predecessors. Next came the more elaborate compilation of the *Pandects*, a digest and abridgment of innumerable treatises on law, with extracts from Ulpian, Papinian, and other approved authorities. Also was published a book of *Institutes*, setting forth the elementary principles of Roman law. These three works were to explain and supersede all older writings, which Justinian is said to have burned as useless lumber. But such a fussy sovereign could not leave his work alone; he brought out a revised edition of it, and to the end kept adding to the Code by frequent edicts, and by over a hundred *novellæ constitutiones*, a phrase translated as "novels", that came to bear so different a meaning for our ears. If all stories be true, Justinian's love of justice in the abstract was not always carried out in practice; and Tribonian, his Lord Chancellor and head of his board of lawyers, was open to the same charges of corruption as could be made against legal pundits down to the days of Lord Bacon. But the work thus done under his auspices has endured as a model for the codes of European nations, most of which are based upon the ancient jurisprudence systematized in the name of Justinian.

# CHAPTER XII

# St. Gregory (A.D. 540–604)

The Goths, expelled, scattered, or absorbed, now disappear from Italy, leaving no monument but the name of an architecture so called in contrast to the classic structures ruined by these northern barbarians. Their place was soon taken by more savage invaders. Alboin, the young king of the Lombards, having overthrown his neighbours the Gepids and turned their king's skull into a drinking cup, gave up his conquest on the Danube to the eastern Avars, that he might head a new raid upon the richer land beyond the Alps (A.D. 567). It was a motley host he gathered for this expedition, some of them Christians of a sort, some mere pagans, all thirsting for blood and spoils in a field they were the men to reap bare, already known to some of them who had served as plundering auxiliaries in the emperor's army. They met with no serious resistance in Italy, and with Pavia as their capital settled themselves in what is now called Lombardy, a rich land which they found almost depopulated by succesive ravages of war and pestilence. There they were thrice attacked by the Franks, trying to snatch from them this choice prize for barbarian warriors. But the Lombards kept their hold, and pushed it through the centre of Italy, between the territories of Rome and Ravenna, so that now half the country was in their hands, while half remained under the precarious government of the emperor's exarchs. The eastern and western sections of his Italian dominion were almost cut off from each other by the Lombard states of Spoletum and Beneventum, whose dukes asserted a quasi-independence of their elected king. Sicily and the southern end, largely Greek by population, stuck closer and longer to Constantinople, in virtue of its sea power, till they were wrested away first by Saracen, then by Norman conquerors.

The early history of the Lombards' immigration is one of quarrels and atrocious murders among themselves, hinting what the poor country people must have suffered from them; yet Italy suffered hardly less from the greed and neglect of its Greek governors, able to oppress but not to defend the provinces held in the emperor's name. The Lombards, like the Goths, grew less barbarous in this sunny home, let their manners be softened by religion, and in the end turned out better masters than their first fierce onrush had promised for them. Wasted by plague, famine, and recurrent invasions, the Italians themselves were sinking back into barbarism, along with all the populations they had tamed beyond Italy, among whom the empire could no longer keep that once effective *Pax Romana*.

As the ancient civilization thus passed into the dark ages, the brighter shone out a light that made a rallying-point and a guide for the remains of western civilization. We here skirt ground still shaken by controversy: not to be traced without question, on one side or other, is the rise of the Church that counts the majority of Catholic Christians as her faithful sons. This much may surely be stated, that the spiritual power of Rome had fallen heir to the greatness of its fame; and that the city deserted by its emperors naturally claimed the allegiance of a new age for the Popes who stood out as fathers of Christendom. The special honour due to their world-famed seat, and to traditions that made it the scene of two apostles' martyrdom, could not but set Rome above all other bishoprics; then the weakness of the Greek exarchs almost forced upon the Pope a leading part in temporal affairs of Italy.

The troubles of that distracted age drove many gentle souls, tender consciences, and bleeding hearts, sick of the sin and misery around them, to withdraw from a world of cruel realities into some congenial solitude, where they might await the kingdom of heaven that seemed so far from earth. Such a secluded life was no special feature of Christianity; we have caught sight of it long before in the Gymnosophists of India, whose spiritual descendants are Yogis and Fakirs of to-day. The "sons of the Prophets", the Rechabites, the Essenes, John the Baptist, were also representatives of that secluded piety of the East—

> That let the legions thunder by,
> And plunged in thought again.

So it was among Eastern devotees that Christian monasticism first arose, notably in Egypt, where about the end of the third century many hermits fled to the deserts to work out their salvation in lonely austerities inspired by an extravagant and often loathsome asceticism. Not a few may be suspected of seeking refuge from labour, perhaps from justice; some were indeed "possessed" by the devils that figure in their legends. The Egyptian Anchorites appear to have been first collected into a community by St. Anthony, then by the middle of the fourth century as many as 7000 fugitives of faith had collected on one island of the Nile, and it could be said with Oriental hyperbole that the deserts had as many inhabitants as the cities of Egypt. Monastic retreats spread over the Christian world, soon taking deep root in the bloodstained lands of Italy, where they gave fresh life to the Church, as did the Teuton conquests to the nation.

That the Church could save society, there was needed in society a new element, and a new force in the Church. Two invasions were needed: that of the Barbarians from the north, that of the Monks from the south. They appeared: the Barbarians first. Behold them closing upon those Romans enervated by servitude, upon those emperors powerless in the heart of their omnipotence. . . . Visible instruments of the Divine justice, they came unconsciously to avenge the oppressed peoples and the slain martyrs. They will destroy, but only to replace what they have destroyed; and moreover they

will cut down nothing which deserves to live or which has still any constitution of life. They will pour out blood in torrents, but they will rejuvenate by their own blood the exhaustion of Europe. They bring with them fire and steel, but also force and life. Amid a thousand crimes and a thousand evils, they call to light, in a still confused form, two things which Roman society knew no longer, the dignity of man and the respect for woman. They are moved rather by instincts than by principles; but when these instincts shall have been fecundated and purified by Christianity they will bring forth chivalry and Catholic royalty. From them there will come above all a sentiment unknown in the Roman empire, perhaps even to the most illustrious pagans, and always incompatible with despotism, the sentiment of honour—"that secret and deep spring of modern society, which is no other than the independence and the inviolability of the human conscience, superior to all powers, to all tyrannies, to all forces from without." They bring moreover liberty, not indeed liberty such as we have since conceived and secured, but the germs and the conditions of all liberty, that is to say the spirit of resistance to excessive power, the manly impatience of a yoke, the profound consciousness of personal rights, of each individual soul's value before other men as before God. . . .

From the depth of Eastern and African deserts, God sends forth a cloud of black-robed men, more intrepid and more patient, more indefatigable and harder to themselves than were ever the Romans or the Barbarians. They spread noiselessly through all the empire, and when the hour of its ruin has struck, they are on foot, in the West as in the East. The Barbarians arrive; and as they advance, beside them, before, behind, wherever they have passed with flame and slaughter, other armies come to encamp in silence, other settlements arise, gather and devote themselves to repairing the miseries of the invasion and to reaping the fruits of the victory. . . . The Roman empire, without the Barbarians, that were an abyss of servitude and corruption. The Barbarians without the Monks, that were chaos. The Barbarians and the Monks united are about to re-make a world that will be called Christendom.—Montalembert's *Monks of the West.*

This eloquent writer is describing how monastic life came under the first of several "rules" that shaped and systematized it for Europe. In the days of Theodoric a Roman youth of noble birth was goaded by religious concern to renounce wealth and home ties for a solitary den in the gorges of the Anio, where he is pictured as rolling himself naked among thorns by way of mortifying his flesh, and when discovered by some shepherds seemed such a strange object that they took him for one of the wild beasts in whose skins he went scantily clothed. The report of his pious excesses spread abroad till, as the legend goes, he was pressed to become head of a community of monks, who found themselves so little satisfied with his austere rule that they presently tried to get rid of him by poison, but, like other attempts on his life, that one was foiled by miracle. This much is certain, that he gathered about him a band of more congenial souls, whom he led to found a new asylum on Monte Cassino, destroying, it is said, a temple of Apollo and a pagan sacred grove at which the peasants still offered superstitious devotion. Legend gave him a twin sister, Scholastica, who

Photo. Alinari

MONASTERY OF MONTE CASSINO: THE PRIOR'S CLOISTER

Photo. Alinari

MONASTERY OF MONTE CASSINO: THE SANCTUARY OF ST. BENEDICT

The apartments associated with the founder's name have been restored and decorated with frescoes (19th Century). They occupy the supposed site of the Saint's original cell.

followed his steps to establish a convent in the valley below, but their human affection was indulged only by one yearly interview.

Here St. Benedict spent the rest of his life in such an odour of sanctity that the rough Totila turned aside to prostrate himself before one whose prayers might avail even a conquering king. But Benedict's piety was more practical than might be supposed from those early raptures: he did not give up his life to idle ecstasy and useless mortifications, like the Eastern fugitives from active life. He laid on the disciples who flocked to this shrine a strict rule of labour, bodily or mental, for the good of the community, to which all private property, as well as personal talent, must be consecrated by lifelong vows in the service of the order that should spend its common possessions and abilities upon good works for the Church and the world. This rule of St. Benedict widely recommended itself as the normal constitution of western monasteries, taking for their manifold task to preach the Gospel, to teach the young, to relieve the poverty bred by war, to bring back into cultivation wasted lands, and to multiply the scriptures and other writings profitable for edification, which might now have been lost but for the patient labour of monks.

There was work among them for a variety of sanctified talents. Cassiodorus, the counsellor of five sovereigns during an agitated half-century, gave up his dignities to establish a monastery in the south of Italy, where during thirty years more he wrote books that help us for the history of his time. He has been styled the restorer of knowledge, by a diligence in collecting manuscripts and in teaching that made his cloister a sheltered nursery of science and arts, elsewhere nipped by winds from the frosty north. Other monasteries were doing the same work, less conspicuously, some of them overwhelmed by the fierce Lombards, as was that of Monte Cassino after a time, when its inmates were able to take refuge behind the walls of Rome.

About this time the Benedictine order received a doughty recruit in the Gregory who would be the first monk to sit in the Papal chair, which he went far to make a throne. Born about A.D. 540, of a noble and wealthy Roman family, like Benedict, he too had his heart turned to heaven by the woes of their native land. He may have seen Rome occupied by Totila, then by Narses; and he was grown to manhood when the death of Narses left Italy with no soldier able to meet the Lombards. The young patrician began his career as a layman, rising to the high office of prefect of the city before he was moved to give up all to follow Christ in monastic poverty. His own mansion he converted into a monastery; he founded several others in Sicily, and the remains of his patrimony he bestowed upon the poor. So severe were his monkish austerities, we are told, as permanently to cripple his health, though the gout from which he suffered hardly suggests to us undue mortification of the flesh. There are many hints of arthritic pains being common in that age, when perhaps, as now, children might suffer for the greed of luxurious fathers.

The turn for affairs which had made him a magistrate did not

escape the notice of his superiors, and when about forty years old Gregory was sent by the Pope as his nuncio or minister at Constantinople, a post likely to lead to promotion if he could recommend himself to the good graces of the emperor who still posed as head of the Church. He remained six years in this post, not very willingly, for indeed a pious soul would find the atmosphere of such a court far from bracing. After his return to Rome he was made abbot of his monastery, and secretary to the Pope. His own heart was set on mission work rather than on the business of the Church. It would appear to have been at this period, if not earlier, that he had his famous interview with blue-eyed, light-haired slaves brought from far for sale in the Roman Forum, and indulged his vein of humour by the pious puns that were to echo in our national history. *Non Angli sed Angeli*, he declared them; and being further told how they came from *Deira*, a country whose king was *Ælla*, he exclaimed that these fair heathen should be plucked *De ira*, from divine wrath, and that *Alleluia* must be sung in their land. It is stated that now he actually set out on a mission to Britain, but was recalled by the Pope on the clamorous appeal of the people. One of his charitable works was buying slave boys to be reared in monasteries; and his correspondence shows him giving a commission for the purchase of the English youths in whose welfare he seems to have taken special interest.

If it scandalize us to find a religious philanthropist in the slave market, let us remember that Gregory took various excuses for freeing slaves, and can even be claimed as the father of the emancipation movement by preaching pity for all men, to free whom from sin Christ had died. "Since the Redeemer and Creator of the World has been pleased to take human form in order to break our servile chain by the grace of liberty" were the pregnant words with which he headed an act of manumission for slaves set free as sons of the Church. His heart could not but go out to such unfortunates, when from the walls of Rome he saw Romans "with a cord about their necks, like packs of dogs, led off to Frankland to be sold in the markets". He had the Christian slaves of unbelievers bought by Church funds—"as cheap as possible" is his practical instruction; in some cases, indeed, he seems to have strained a point in giving liberty gratis to the runaway slaves of Jews, to whom else he was tolerant in the main. The persecution of Jews was already on foot in Christian countries when Gregory as Pope forbade baptizing them on compulsion, and in several cases ordered over-zealous bishops to restore their synagogues, taken from them by force, while he would not allow new ones to be built. "It is by gentleness, by kindness, by exhortations", was his injunction, "that we must win the unbelieving to unity, for fear of scaring off by threats and terror those whom friendly teaching and the dread of the last judgment have not brought to the faith." True, he was not always consistent, for in another instance he allowed the Jews to be tempted by a remission of rent to the converted, as he authorized paternal punishment for certain obstinate pagans on a consideration that would be

often quoted by bigots[1]: "If their conversion want sincerity, their children at least will be baptized in a more hopeful state".

In A.D. 590 Pope Pelagius died of the still-lingering plague, and Gregory, known as his right hand, was called to the bishopric by general acclamation. His reluctance is said to have taken the form of a secret letter to the emperor, begging him not to confirm the election, a veto which the court of Constantinople held in its prerogative. Another story makes his modesty pushed to such a point that he had himself smuggled out of Rome in a basket of goods, to be brought back and pushed into the papal chair. To this time belongs the legend that, the city suffering under a double scourge of flood and pestilence, he led the Romans on a great penitential procession, to which over Hadrian's Tomb appeared an angel sheathing the sword of heavenly wrath; and ever since that pagan monument has been known as the Castle of St. Angelo.

It was indeed a time when any man might from his heart have said *Nolo Episcopari.* Gregory compared his position to that of the captain of a worn-out ship, tossed on stormy waves and leaking at every seam. As head of the Church he had to concern himself for the miseries of a ravaged country all round its seat. The now considerable properties held in the name of St. Peter made him the greatest landlord in Italy, and the absence of the emperors was drawing him into the position of temporal governor at Rome, the more so since its territory, cut off by Lombard invasion, held but precarious communications with the imperial viceroy at Ravenna. The pillaging Lombards themselves were half his subjects by their partial conversion; and their leaders appear not to have been without respect for a pontiff who armed troops to chastise their insolence. Four years after he came to the Popedom the Lombard king Agilulph advanced to the siege of Rome, but is said to have been met on the steps of St. Peter's—then outside the walls—by Gregory, who, as Leo had overawed Attila, won him to retire without further injury than a final wasting of the Campagna. At one time the Pope took on himself to make a special truce for the territory of Rome. He had a friend at the barbarous court in its queen, Theodolind, a German princess, who as a Catholic was ready to intercede between him and her Arian husband, and whose influence went far in winning over the nation to orthodoxy and to the milder manners that had gained upon them when half a century later the "Laws of the Lombards" were recorded in Latin. As yet they made very coarse Christians, often at odds among themselves, their "dukes" disposed to assert against the king such an independence as circumstances were forcing upon Rome with regard to the emperor.

The "unspeakable Lombards" troubled Gregory hardly more than did the exarchs of Ravenna and their oppressive officials. We find him constantly urging them to their duty in vain, then appealing from

[1] This word seems to have had a strange history. According to Dr. Bradley it is supposed to be a corruption of *Visigoth*, originally a mere epithet of detestation bestowed by the Catholic Franks upon their Arian neighbours to the south. But in Gregory's time Spain was converted from its Arianism.

them to the court of Constantinople that claimed to rule a land it could not protect. He had to play the diplomatist in this scene of tortuous intrigue. He had to take a hand in foreign politics, as when the Franks and Burgunds sought his help in negotiating with the emperor an alliance against the Avars, their common foe. In his anxiety to keep oiled Rome's creaking relations with Constantinople, he even stooped to act the courtier, as too many ministers of God have been tempted to bow in some house of Rimmon. The emperor Maurice was pious in his way, whom Gregory could flatter with a clearer conscience, though he protested against such imperial interference as forbidding soldiers to turn monks. Maurice came to be deposed by his disheartened soldiery, justly indignant at his meanness in refusing to ransom a body of their comrades taken captive by the Avars. The centurion Phocas, leader of this revolution, began a hateful reign by slaughtering Maurice's sons, one by one, before his eyes, then the emperor himself, his wife, and his innocent daughters. It is a dark blot on Gregory's record that to such a blood-stained usurper he addressed letters of congratulation, while giving him a mild hint for good behaviour, backed by a singular perversion of the truth: "There is this difference between the barbarian kings and the emperors of the republic, that the former rule slaves, and the latter free men". It was the republican citizens who had sunk into slavery at Constantinople, whereas the Lombards enjoyed a rough freedom, tempered by the high hand of a king elected to be the chief of their dukes, whose violence and rapine blinded Gregory to their manly virtues.

This Pope's eulogists have to excuse his hailing Phocas's accession as dictated by an official style that now ran much to idle compliments, interlarded by such expressions as "Your Glory", "Your Majesty", "Your Eminence", some of them falling in value through the centuries till "Your Lordship" makes a common form of address in Italy, and a waiter in Spain is curtly ordered as "Your Grace". But there seems no doubt that Gregory stretched his conscience to stand well with the new power; as also he had too civil relations with the Frankish queen, Brunhild, who came to be dismembered by wild horses as a tenfold murderess. He was more uncompromising with the spiritual authority that presumed over his own. The four other heads of the Christian world were the Patriarchs of Constantinople, Alexandria, Antioch, and Jerusalem, beside whom Rome had come to be regarded as *primus inter pares*. Now, under the wing of the emperor and backed by the Oriental bishops, the Byzantine Patriarch was for arrogating to himself the style of ecumenical or universal, that is, head of the Church, a pretension which, withdrawn and renewed, after the famous Iconoclastic and *Filioque* controversies, would end in a definite separation of the Latin and the Greek communions. Against that wrong to the see of St. Peter, Gregory raised an indignant protest. "*Oh tempora! Oh mores!*" he exclaimed in a letter to the emperor. "All Europe is in the hands of the barbarians. The cities are overthrown, the castles in ruins, the provinces unpeopled—the earth has no longer arms to till it; the

Photo. Alinari

GREGORY THE GREAT

*Statue in the Church of S. Gregory, Rome: said to have been begun by Michael Angelo, completed by Corateri*

idolaters rage against the faithful unto death; and priests who ought to weep humbly in dust and ashes are profaning themselves with titles of vanity!" It is not his own dignity he is defending, but the honour of the Church, he would have us understand. "I am the servant of all true priests, but if anyone raises his head against the Lord and the laws of our fathers, I trust not to bow mine even before the sword."

Crowded with varied activities was this pontificate of fourteen years. The "argus-eyed" Gregory kept an untiring watch on a flock scattered over Europe, and gave himself no rest in rebuking the scandals that vexed him in the Church and the world. Besides several edifying treatises, more marked by zeal than by taste or judgment, he has left hundreds of letters to throw light on the man and his times. He was a diligent preacher at Rome. He gave the service of the Mass its present form; and tradition ascribes to him an improvement in musical notation which connects his name with the chants of the Church; he certainly founded a school of music and made a collection of devotional hymns. Among the relics preserved of him was the scourge which he used to tune the careless minds of choir boys, who at that period had to do sore penance like their elders. He cherished Christian art as well as music, maintaining images and pictures to be the books of the illiterate, thereby providing matter of protest for ages to come. He is accused of having made light of learning, but that seems too much to say. He fostered the monasteries that would make a refuge for letters, while his own interest was less in study than in the absorbing task of enlightening both heretics and heathen. His charities were enormous, in money and in the distribution of food. He is said to have sent out cooked meals daily to all the sick poor of the city; and those who had seen better days he would cheer by a dish from his own table. His letters abound in such homely details as the question of buying bedclothes for 3000 "maids of God" who suffered from the cold of a Roman winter. There is a story of him blaming himself as the cause of a poor man's dying of hunger in Rome, which he so much took to heart that for days he abstained from celebrating Mass.

Of the missions he planted far and wide the most famous and the most fruitful was one by which he realized his early concern for the souls of those islanders that had struck him as deserving to be angels. In A.D. 596 he sent to Britain the prior of his own monastery, Augustine, with a company of monks, who in passing through Gaul heard such an alarming account of our forefathers' ferocity that Bede reports them fain to turn back, till heartened afresh for their enterprise by the exhortations of its promoter. With some Frank comrades to help them as interpreters they landed in Kent, where the Church had already a foothold through the conversion of king Ethelbert's wife; and he himself did not long delay to submit to baptism: thus in that age was St. Paul's text often justified in the unbelieving husband being sanctified by the wife. The leader of the mission became the first bishop of Canterbury; and, later on, Gregory's design was completed by the creation of another see at York. Amid the discords of the Heptarchy

the advance of the Cross was fitfully interrupted; then, before England could become a united Christian kingdom, it appeared how the new faith might bring not only peace but also a sword upon earth.

Christianity had already taken root among the Britons, driven into their mountains and isles by the encroaching Saxon. Ireland, all along cut off from the empire, and Scotland, its Ultima Thule, had developed an independent form of belief, blending with the teachings of early converts in Roman Britain, among whom St. Alban's name is honoured as our proto-martyr. The conversion of Ireland is ascribed to St. Patrick, captured in youth by pirates and sold into Irish slavery, from which he was redeemed, only to come back offering spiritual blessings in return for his sufferings under a savage yoke. The shadowy chiefs and bards of an island which seems to have been a rendezvous and slave market for corsairs, let themselves be won over so quickly that the green isle soon became nursery of a passionate and romantic form of devotion that has been taxed as wanting in moral earnestness. At the other end of the known world from that thirsty Thebaid of Egypt, under the Atlantic rains, sprang up hives of monks whose communications with Gaul engaged them in the cultivation of a learning new to their clime. St. Patrick has been taken as born, or at least taught, in some Roman colony of Gaul. The Irish Church distinguished itself also by its expansive ardour. From its bosom came the St. Bride or St. Bridget, who, to wither the temptations stirred by her beauty, prayed for the grace of being made unlovely in human eyes. Her name lingers all over Scotland and the western isles, as does that of St. Columba, who on Iona planted a famous school of the Cross. In Gregory's time Ireland repaid the debt of its conversion by sending to the Continent Columbanus, who, after an agony of conversion, founded at the foot of the Vosges a monastic rule more severe than that of St. Benedict; then from north and south the two orders met to provoke each other's rivalry in good works; but the Benedictine name prevailed, as the Church of Rome would overlay Britain's insular independence of faith.

Still earlier missionaries seem to have visited the precariously Romanized south of Scotland, which claims the first of the apostles as its patron saint, while Ireland is content with St. Patrick, and Wales with St. David. One story makes St. Patrick born in Galloway or Strathclyde, where, from the the dying hand of St. Ninian, he had snatched the torch borne over to Ireland. From Ireland came the Scots who would transform the name of Caledonia; and hence Columba brought his double text *laborare et orare*, in the strength of which he made the poor soil of Iona a renowned sanctuary to draw pilgrims from all parts of Western Christendom. Among his followers are taken to be the Culdees whom sound Presbyterians have claimed as spiritual forefathers; but here again we are on questionable ground. There was at least one other evangelist at work in Scotland along with Columba, the St. Mungo who became patron saint of Glasgow. While that stern and wild land grew dotted with chapels

and cells, her missionaries turned south into the heathen darkness of Northumbria. There they encountered not only fleshly enemies, but the Augustine teachers pressing as boldly up to the north. The two schools, taught from opposite ends of Europe, the one animated by Celtic fervour, the other steeled by Roman discipline, were long on clashing terms. Their hostility is made the most of in the legend of the Anglian St. Guthlac, who, after a night of terror in his hermitage, beleaguered, as he feared, by British Christians, gave thanks in the morning to find that his assailants had been no more than devils. The gap between British and Roman Christianity makes theme of controversy down to our own day. Enough to say that it was closed by an arrangement in which Rome gained upon such points of dispute as the date of keeping Easter and the shape of the tonsure; then for centuries, with spasms of insular restlessness, all Britain looked to Rome as the chief shrine of its faith, to which pilgrims now streamed through Gaul, if only on their way to Jerusalem.

Henceforth, over most of Europe, the organized Catholic Church took the place of the Roman empire, and Latin became the language of religion. The clergy, regular and secular, were its soldiers, who, amid barbarous warfare, held up the ensigns of the Prince of Peace, when monks and missionaries could rightly be styled "the chivalry of God". In this army the monastic orders formed at first a *corps d'élite*, ready for the most perilous services, and taking their superiors as generals under the Pope. The most earnest churchman cannot deny the corruptions that cankered the work of men like Benedict and Gregory; but the most candid critic has to recognize their institutions as beacons of refuge in the storms of those Dark Ages that now fell upon the world. The cloisters that would become hotbeds of idleness and profligacy, were at first schools of practical socialism, which has never been practical without religious inspiration. Their brethren gave a new dignity to labour, debased by slavery as it was in the ancient world. Their services to humanity were manifold, from ransoming captives to entertaining travellers, from tending the most loathsome sickbeds to weeding out the old Adam in the young. Lonely hermits, too, devoted themselves not only to repentance and prayer, but to such useful tasks as working a ferry, garrisoning a hospice in the Alpine snows, or keeping a lamp burning to warn ships from a rocky coast. The clergy in general saved the dim light of learning from being blown out by the blasts of war, while the gospel they preached was a continual rebuke to their own shortcomings, as well as to the cruelty, covetousness, and pride that but for this creed would have drowned in blood what man for a thousand years had been winning from wild nature to build thereon cities, temples, and courts below the walls of castles.

Gregory had but a Pisgah view of this conquest of Rome's spiritual army. Crippled by ailments, and heartbroken by the troubles against which he had to make head, he died A.D. 604, leaving a name that heaped the titles of Saint and Great on his own chosen epithet "Ser-

vant of the servants of God". "Consul of God" is an apt phrase used in his epitaph. Catholic writers would call him the greatest of the Popes but for another Gregory who five centuries later would be better known as Hildebrand. Gibbon's more chary praise puts it that "his virtues, and even his faults, a singular mixture of simplicity and cunning, of pride and humility, of sense and superstition, were happily suited to his station, and to the temper of the times". Dr. Hodgkin sums up the general verdict of history in pronouncing him "the last of the great Romans of the Empire, the true founder of the Medieval Papacy". Gregory I must at least be owned as a master spirit of his time, who made a mark on centuries to come by the energies he directed and disciplined for new war with barbarism.

## CHAPTER XIII

# Heraclius (A.D. 575–641)

Old Rome was not yet fully independent of New Rome. The cruel Phocas had repaid Gregory's compliments by recognizing the Pope's supremacy over the Patriarch; and the Pope himself took that disputed title of ecumenical head of Christendom. Yet half a century after Gregory's death Pope Martin was haled to Constantinople, to be tried, tormented, and exiled as a rebel in condemning the emperor's heretical doctrine, shared by his Patriarch, who had been excommunicated therefor by this Pope's predecessor. The next century saw Pope Zacharias for the first time elected without confirmation by the emperor, who in the previous pontificate had made a last futile attempt to command the Church of Rome, from which, however, he was able to cut off the dioceses of Illyria and of Southern Italy. Henceforth the Popes were safe from the indignities inflicted by emperors upon such bishops within their reach as might not conform to their shifting standard of orthodoxy. So far had the two Churches been drifting apart in storms of war and controversy, dragged along with the wreck of sundered state.

From the regeneration of the western world we turn aside for a glance at that Eastern Roman Empire, which could be spoken of as Greek rather, now that a bastard form of Greek had been replacing Latin as its official language. Historians till our time dubbed it the Byzantine Empire, a name so charged with obloquy that some recent writers protest against it as hiding the fact that this state still represented the New Rome, transferred by Constantine to the edge of Asia. The Lower Empire is a name with which French writers may appear to have belittled it, but Sir Thomas Browne uses this word in the same sense of *late*: "as low as Julian". The Later Roman Empire is the title used by Professor Bury, who insists on our remembering how for centuries it made a bulwark for Christendom against Asiatic invasion, and a refuge for the light of civilization, shining pale but steady at Constantinople, which, with a population of a million or so, remained the greatest city and mart in Europe. This view seems a reaction from the contempt of former judgments, thus summed up by Lecky in his *History of European Morals*:—

> Of that Empire it can only be said that it represents one of the least noble forms that civilization has yet assumed. Though very cruel and very sensual, there have been times when cruelty assumed more ruthless, and sensuality more extravagant, aspects; but there has been no other enduring civilization

so destitute of all the elements of greatness. The Byzantine Empire was pre-eminently the age of treachery. Its vices were the vices of men who had ceased to be brave without learning to be virtuous. Without patriotism, without the fruition or desire of liberty, after the first paroxysms of religious agitation without genius or intellectual activity; slaves, and willing slaves, in both their actions and their thoughts, immersed in sensuality and in the most frivolous pleasures, the people only emerged from their listlessness when some theological subtlety, or some rivalry in the chariot races, stimulated them into frantic riots. They exhibited all the externals of advanced civilization. They possessed knowledge; they had continually before them the noble literature of ancient Greece, instinct with the loftiest heroism; but that literature, which afterwards did so much to revivify Europe, could fire the degenerate Greeks with no spark or semblance of nobility. For long centuries the history of the Empire is a monotonous story of the intrigues of priests, eunuchs, and women, of perpetual crimes and conspiracies encircling the throne.

Byzantine morals became a proverb; and the material force also of this empire fell into conspicuous decay. While other barbarians pushed into the western regions, or made room for themselves by slaughtering one another off in Central Europe, Slavonic tribes from the north began to intrude upon the Balkan peninsula, at first slowly infiltrating, then pouring in with a rush that deposited their race as the main stratum in this corner of Europe. In another quarter rose a more formidable storm of invasion, to sweep from the deserts of Arabia like a blasting simoom, overwhelming the Asian and African dominions of the empire till it was reduced to tattered and shrinking fragments on both sides of the Bosphorus, at last to the precinct of the great city that, after eight centuries of fitful struggle on shifting ground, would see the Cross dashed down before the Crescent at the fall of Constantinople.

A moment of revived glory the sinking empire had early in the seventh century, charged for it with so wide destruction. The usurper Phocas came to be overthrown by Heraclius, son of an exarch of Africa, whose successful naval expedition (A.D. 610) put him upon a throne threatened from two sides. After Justinian's death there had been twenty years indecisive war with Persia; then the murder of Maurice gave Chosroes II excuse for a fresh attack, which he pushed on against Maurice's avenger, showing how vain was his pretence of friendship for a neighbour potentate. The empire, hardly able to defend itself against Avar and Slav incursions, had to submit to a series of humiliations across the Bosphorus. Jerusalem, where Jews and Christians now lived on scowling terms, was taken (A.D. 615) by the Persians, who horrified Christendom by carrying off what passed for the true Cross. Damascus had already fallen. The enemy went on to capture Egypt, thus cutting off from Constantinople its chief corn supply, and afflicting it with famine and pestilence. A Persian force appeared at Chalcedon, on the opposite shore of the Bosphorus, there to hold itself for years in a fortified camp, like an ominous vulture awaiting the great city's fall.

For the first twelve years of his reign Heraclius made no head against such misfortunes, unless by stirring up over Europe a persecution of unhappy Jews, in hope of propitiating the heavenly power that appeared to frown on him. At one time he saw nothing for it but to abandon Constantinople, moving the seat of empire to his native Carthage; and he had actually sent off his treasures by sea, to be lost in shipwreck, when a popular outbreak forced him to an oath that he would never desert the proud capital. Then from the depths of despair both prince and people were rescued by a fit of religious fervour that breathed a new spirit into their adversity.

Nothing in the history of the times seems more notable than the contrast between that long inactivity of Heraclius and the way in which he roused himself to be a brave and skilful general, as no emperor had proved since Theodosius. He may have been brooding over his plans, studying the art of war, looking out for allies and resources, when he found his people also stirred to a new martial temper, steeled for the nonce by devotion. The Cross in the hands of sacrilegious Persians made an aim for what was preached as a holy war. The church plate of Constantinople was melted down to provide means for an expedition, prepared under such inauspicious circumstances as a treacherous attack by the Avars that had nearly penetrated into the walls of the city. The empire's strength was its fleet, more than once baffling attempts from the Persian camp at Chalcedon, and enabling Heraclius to choose for his own point of attack a coast on which his great enemy might least expect him.

Not till A.D. 622 did he set out on a series of campaigns through six years of almost unbroken victory. Sailing round Asia Minor, he landed in the Gulf of Scanderoon to attack Persia at the Cilician Gates, like Alexander. Here he could spend months in organizing and training the heterogeneous army he gathered from various parts of the empire. When at last a Persian host came to meet him, after adroit manœuvring among the mountains, he shattered it in the first battle, and marched to the shores of the Euxine, to leave his troops there in winter quarters. Next year, from that northern coast he advanced through Armenia into Persia, burning the chief temple of the Fire-worship in retaliation for the destruction of Jerusalem. But we need not trace all the ill-recorded campaigns, in which the Persian generals were vainly put on their mettle under such penalties of defeat as being flayed alive by their tyrannous master, who himself durst not encounter so doughty an assailant.

In the midst of his triumphant career Heraclius had almost lost Constantinople, beleaguered by the Avars on land, and threatened across the strait by the Persian force at Chalcedon; but the fleet served the city as defence on that side, and a miracle was believed to have struck panic into the superstitious barbarians. The decisive battle with Chosroes's troops was fought (A.D. 627) near Nineveh, not far from the scene of Alexander's final victory over Darius. This brought about a revolution of the Persians against their tyrant, cruelly put to

death by his own son, who made peace with Heraclius, giving up the conquered Roman provinces and the Holy Rood, which, after consecrating the victor's triumph at Constantinople, was duly restored to Jerusalem. So ended what might be called a prelude to the crusades.

The name of Heraclius is hardly known to the general reader, yet he should have a pedestal in history among other little celebrated heroes who from time to time were able to renew the empire's lease of life during a long period thus summarized by a great historian:—

> The campaigns of Heraclius are worthy of a place beside those of Hannibal himself; but all that destiny allowed him was to chastise in his own realm a foe whom he had seen encamped round the walls of his capital. The stern Iconoclasts stopped the progress of degradation at home and abroad; they drove back the irresistible Saracen, they reformed the administrative machine, and strove to re-establish a purer faith and worship. They gave indeed three centuries of greatness to an empire which they found on the brink of ruin; but even they did but preserve, restore, wake into new life, the mission of original creation which was denied even to them. The glorious Macedonian dynasty reformed a corrupted government, and won back the dissevered provinces of the empire; but their mission was still only to preserve and to restore; it is among other lands and ruder nations that we must look for the men who worked for the future of their children, and not for the past of their forefathers. At last, when all was over, when the political succession of fifteen hundred years was doomed to extinction, when the day of restoration, reform, and preservation had all passed by, when the empire had shrunk to a single city, and that city contained but one man worthy of the name of king or citizen, the last Emperor of the Romans could but die in the breach before the onslaught of the barbarian, while Italy was wasting her strength in the warfare of selfish mercenaries, and England, losing her last hold on her old Aquitanian heritage, was arming to decide the genealogical quarrels of the White and the Red Rose.

So writes Freeman, protesting against the common contemptuous neglect of Byzantine history. But this mention of Heraclius has in view only what he did in his own defence. That emperor's exploits against Persia would have an effect, more than he knew, on the stability of both powers. The shock of his attack had broken up the Persian realm to fall asunder before a storm gathering unnoticed on the southern edge of the two empires that opened a course for it by ruining each other's bulwarks. As Heraclius ended his victorious career he is said to have received a summons from an Arabian chief whose obscure name he might readily forget; but it was soon to be written over half the world in letters of fire and blood, and sooner to obliterate the marks of the emperor's own conquest.

Almost at once, indeed, he heard how his troops had been defeated near the Dead Sea by a band of the wild warriors that in a few years would become so formidably famous as Saracens. These were followers of Mohammed, now rising to his zenith, to die two years later as he was preparing an attack on Syria. But upon it his successor, the first Caliph, let loose fanatical swarms that, twice defeating a large Roman

army, pressed on to capture Damascus. Heraclius, after that one sustained outburst of heroism, now relapsed into the strange inertness of his early reign. Enfeebled by disease, it would appear even by mental derangement, the conqueror of Persia shrunk from facing this evident foe. All he did was to hurry to Jerusalem and carry off the Cross, to guard it in St. Sophia's. Next year (A.D. 637) Jerusalem had to yield to the Caliph Omar. Cowering behind the walls of Constantinople, the paralysed emperor heard of the fall of one city after another in his Asian domain, where province after province was being torn from Christendom by the converting sword of Islam. He sent his son, Constantine, against those invaders; but he was beaten back. From Syria the victorious Moslems pressed into Mesopotamia, mastering the fortresses so long held on the Euphrates. They had already overthrown the Persian army in a great battle that opened to them the dazzling spoil of the capital, Ctesiphon; and another victory crushed the fire-worshipping empire and the Sassanid dynasty, within ten years after the death of Chosroes. Babylon was taken, and as Heraclius lay on his deathbed (A.D. 641) he knew that Egypt had been invaded by the Crescent; he knew not how quickly it would be carried along the north coast of Africa, once more to ruin his native Carthage, and at the end of the century to be planted beside the Atlantic waves.

Before long Constantinople itself was twice besieged by those terrible troops that seemed to have sprung from the earth like the crop of dragon's teeth sown by Cadmus, their assault as yet foiled by the fortifications that for centuries would guard the great city against such foes. Now also it was defended by the fearsome mystery of "Greek fire", since the science of that age had supplied its artillery with a concoction of materials the secret of which came to be lost when it gave place to the more deadly gunpowder working such upheaval in war. What Greek fire was to the empire the early enthusiasm of Islam was to its new enemy, for whose prowess this chapter makes an introduction.

# CHAPTER XIV

# Mohammed (A.D. 570–632)

Arabia, that stony link between Asia and Africa, had hitherto played no prominent part in the world's history, unless by the effect of its stern scenery on the religious imagination of Jewish neighbours near akin to its own inhabitants. Its fertile southern end, exposed to maritime invasion, was cut off landwards by a stretch of forbidding deserts that hardly invited conquest, guarded by nomad tribes of those fierce Ishmaelites whose inveterate feuds confined their valour to petty warfare or to mercenary service. The country was claimed as a province of Persia, which, like Turkey of to-day, could exercise but feeble sway over wandering warriors of the desert and proud chiefs who held themselves independent in mountain fastnesses. Chiefs and warriors needed but a standard and a cry to lead them rushing forth to take a masterful place in other lands, over which their blood has been transfused by an intolerant faith. So the original lot of Isaac and Ishmael became reversed. Israel was already a down-trodden exile; but the sons of outcast Hagar, conquerors abroad, are still firmly settled in the peninsula that may have been the cradle of the whole Semitic race, where in a singular degree they preserve the manners and thoughts of patriarchal days. Mohammed was the lightning flash to prove Arabia's black sands explosive, and set them blazing "sky-high from Delhi to Grenada": so Carlyle puts it, who in this vehement prophet finds a man after his own heart, and a true son of the race he describes in his emphatic style, labouring to heighten picturesque features.

Their country itself is notable; the fit habitation for such a race. Savage inaccessible rock mountains, great grim deserts, alternating with beautiful strips of verdure: wherever water is, there is a greenness, beauty, odoriferous balm-shrubs, date trees, frankincense trees. Consider that wide waste horizon of sand, empty, silent, like a sand sea, dividing habitable place from habitable. You are all alone there, left alone with the Universe; by day a fierce sun blazing on it with intolerable radiance; by night the great deep Heaven with its stars. Such a country is fit for a swift-handed, deep-hearted race of men. There is something most agile, active, and yet most meditative, enthusiastic in the Arab character. The Persians are called the French of the East; we will call the Arabs Oriental Italians. A gifted noble people; a people of wild strong feelings, and of iron restraint over these: the characteristic of noble-mindedness, of genius. The wild Bedouin welcomes the stranger to his tent, as one having right to all that is there; were it his worst enemy he will slay his foal to treat him, will serve him with sacred hospitality for three days,

will set him fairly on his way;—and then, by another law as sacred, kill him if he can. In words too, as in action. They are not a loquacious people, taciturn rather; but eloquent, gifted when they do speak. An earnest, truthful kind of men. They are, as we know, of Jewish kindred: but with that deadly terrible earnestness of the Jews they seem to combine something graceful, brilliant, which is not Jewish.

Thinly populated and sterile as most of Arabia was, it had some considerable cities, among which Mecca stood prominent as shrine of ancient sun and star worship once probably shared by all the peoples of this region. Here, in a sacred enclosure, stood as now the Kaaba, "Ear of God", a temple fabled to have been built by Adam, or Abraham, containing a black stone, perhaps in fact a meteorite fallen from heaven, to which, long before Mohammed, pilgrims resorted to circle round it seven times naked, and reverently to drink of the adjacent well, Zem-Zem, taken to be that revealed to Hagar in the wilderness. The water has a slight medicinal flavour, as of Epsom salts; in our analysing day it is also suspected of being tainted with sewage, so as to scatter infection through the devout crowds who lose no chance of drinking and being douched by it, besides carrying away precious bottles charged with microbes, and a sheet soaked in the water to serve them as shroud, sometimes brought into use too soon after a pilgrimage that is the pious Mussulman's counsel of perfection. The Kaaba, towards which reverent eyes are turned in prayer from China to Guinea, is veiled in a rich black cloth annually renewed by a solemn embassy, the old one being cut into shreds to be sold as relics. It now makes the centre of a quadrangle enclosed by colonnades and dotted by pavilions, at night lit up by a galaxy of lamps, and at all hours, in the pilgrimage season, crowded by venerating groups whose devotion sometimes ferments into scenes like those of a western revival. In "the unchangeable East" religious emotion is still true to ancient forms; but when young Mohammed first threw himself into those time-honoured ceremonies adoration had a multiplicity of objects in 360 rude idols, one for each day of the Arab year.

In charge of the mysteries were the sacred Koreish clan, like the tribe of Levi, or the Brahmins of India, who made a dominant caste at Mecca. About the time when Pope Gregory became a monk, Mohammed was born (A.D. 570), in the principal family of this caste, his grandfather having been the special guardian of the shrine; but their family appears to have come down in the world. The boy, soon left an orphan, was brought up by his uncle, Abu Talib, with real affection on both sides, and in his company he would be like to make journeys to Syria and Palestine, as to Arabian fairs where he could meet merchants of other tribes and nations. The status of a camel driver, with which sneering infidels reproached his early days, need be no mean or dull lot in that life of patriarchal commerce, setting an open-eyed lad in the way of seeing the world, not without chances of perilous adventure when a caravan must always be on the watch against robbers of the

desert. As a herdboy, too, he steeped his mind in the wondrous moods of stony hill and sandy plain. Later on he was taken into employment by a rich kinswoman, the widow Khadija, in whose service he may have had further opportunities of travel. Thus, while still young, he might be brought in touch with Christians and Jews of the Arabian borderlands, whose faith would help to colour the nebulous ferment that early filled an enquiring mind. It is not necessary to suppose, as has been done, that he became a catechumen of some Syrian or Sinaitic monastery, when at any border marketplace, or round many a desert camp fire, he could pick up foreign notions to shape a religion of his own. Arabia was in close connection with Abyssinia, whose first king was fabled to be son of Solomon and the queen of Sheba, and it had been converted to an heretical form of Christianity. From various points of contact the heathendom of this peninsula must have already been tinged by an infusion of Jewish and Christian story.

Mohammed's mistress appreciated him so well as to make him her husband, though of an age to be her son, and he always distinguished her by grateful affection among the dozen or so of wives afterwards added to his harem, mostly widows as they were, to whom he may have felt a certain duty when their husbands had fallen in his cause. Now well to do, he could give himself to brooding reveries, meditating in congenial solitude on the questions that had stirred the mind of Job, as of many another son of the desert. Like other heroes he came down to posterity as strong, handsome, and winning in his manners. If we can trust all the memories that would loom round such a personality, he was noted as upright and trustworthy, simple in his habits, fond of children and animals. He was no doubt sensitive, highly strung, even hysterical. He is said to have been passionately fond of perfumes, but to have abhorred strong drink, an indulgence he was to damn for the good of no small part of the human race. More than half his life, however, may well have passed without much notice of him, unless as a prosperous and respectable neighbour somewhat unduly given to dreaming.

Not till he was about forty did he begin to preach the religion that had been shaping in his reflective mind. Tradition puts its birth pangs in a cave, where, as was his wont, he had given himself to lonely prayer and fasting. His first confidant was his elderly wife, who readily accepted her husband as an apostle. A few friends were next gained over, among them his cousin Ali, and Abu Bekr, a leading citizen of Mecca, who would be his lieutenant and successor. But so slow came conviction that after three years he had made only thirty converts, some of them negro slaves, who, in passing through Abyssinia, might have been prepared by Christian teachings.

This Prophet had at first no honour in his own country. As the Persians came bursting upon Syria and Palestine, Mohammed took a bolder tone, threatening the sacred Koreish tribe with the wrath of heaven if they refused his revelation. Some were persuaded or startled into belief, but the most part treated him as a madman. While fear

of blood feud and respect for his noble kin as yet hindered violence against himself, the negro converts were so persecuted that Mohammed bid them seek refuge in Abyssinia, not denied by its Christian king. He himself is accused of being at this time willing to compromise with the idolatry he had hotly denounced; but soon he was loudly as ever preaching: "There is but one God, and Mohammed is his prophet"; then insults and injuries only exasperated his zeal, and brought about him fresh adherents, including some who had been bitter opponents.

His uncle, Abu-Talib, though not a believer, protected him against the hostile majority; and the whole family became banned by the rest of their tribe. But Abu-Talib died; so did Mohammed's faithful wife; and he was fain to try his message in other quarters without much success, except that disciples made among the pilgrims gained a considerable standing in Medina, where a good many Jews seem to have been disposed to look on him as the Messiah, yet soon proved such critical disciples as to embitter his early sympathy with their creed. At home his position became so perilous that after hiding in a cave from would-be murderers he fled to Medina, 250 miles away. This, A.D. 622, is the momentous year of the *Hejira* (Flight) from which dates the history of Islam, the Arabic name given to the Prophet's religion.

Medina welcomed so warmly the outcast of Mecca that he soon found himself in the position of a chief as well as a teacher, and could lead a few hundred fanatics to congenial raids upon his persecutors. One fight he won, another he lost; and the enemy came to attack Medina, but found it too well defended. After a few years of desultory warfare a term of truce was agreed on, Mohammed and his followers being allowed to visit the sacred places of Mecca, while for three days the Koreish withdrew from the city.

Now the long smouldering fire of enthusiasm found fuel to blaze up into conflagration. Converts poured in from far and near, and eight years after the Hejira hundreds of warriors had grown to thousands. The truce having been broken by the opposite faction, Mohammed marched upon Mecca, entered it without resistance, but wreaked vengeance only on the idols that defiled the Kaaba. This bloodless triumph gained him all Arabia, or what tribes held out were brought to conformity by his exultant followers. Ten years after lurking for his life he had become the centre of a vigorous nationality eager to play its fierce part in history. He had already called on the rulers of Rome, Persia, and Abyssinia to accept his revelation, and he was preparing to force it upon Syria, when he died (A.D. 632), leaving his memory to be core of a passionate devotion that would conquer half the world. He was buried at Medina, where his tomb makes a goal of pilgrimage for the faithful, only second in their eyes to the shrines of Mecca, which he raised to new honour as the centre of the Moslem world. At Mecca, when he felt the hand of death on him, he had delivered his last sermon, thus abridged by Mr. Stanley Lane-Poole (*Studies in a Mosque*):—

"Ye People! Hearken to my words; for I know not whether after this year I shall ever be amongst you here again.

"Your Lives and your Property are sacred and inviolable amongst one another until the end of time.

"The Lord hath ordained to every man the share of his inheritance: a Testament is not lawful to the prejudice of heirs.

"The child belongeth to the Parent: and the violater of Wedlock shall be stoned.

"Ye people! Ye have rights demandable of you. Treat your women well.

"And your Slaves, see that you feed them with such food as ye eat yourselves, and clothe them with the stuff ye wear. And if they commit a fault which ye are not willing to forgive, then sell them, for they are the servants of the Lord, and are not to be tormented.

"Ye people! Hearken unto my speech and comprehend it. Know that every Muslim is the brother of every other Muslim. All of you are on the same equality: ye are one Brotherhood."

Then, looking up to heaven, he cried:

"O Lord! I have delivered my message and fulfilled my mission." And all the multitude answered: "Yea, verily hast thou!" "O Lord! I beseech Thee, bear Thou witness to it!" and, like Moses, he lifted up his hands and blessed the people.

No legendary tale seems more amazing than the sudden eruption of that volcanic creed that spread so fast and far, to harden into such a rigid formation. That an unlettered dreamer should have been able to sublimate the legends of neighbour peoples into a new religion, to cast down his native idols, to wear out the contempt of kinsmen and quench the anger of foes, above all to deceive himself into what must have been an honest enthusiasm, if alloyed by fanatical arts, shows Mohammed no ordinary man. Students of history who do not share Carlyle's boisterous admiration for success can note more than one crisis at which the fortune of his movement seemed to hang by a hair, and may learn the names of other Arabian prophets, "boasting themselves to be somewhat", whose propaganda came to be lost on stony ground, or sucked into the sand like the sudden torrents of their native wadys. It may be that favouring conditions might have made for them also a multitude of converts. But a sympathetic knowledge of human nature no longer stigmatizes him who came to be *the* Prophet of the East as a mere cunning impostor, whose followers have tempted abuse by their hot reviling of "infidels" and their pride in being true believers.[1] The fierce bigotry which this religion engendered seems indeed to have been less congenial to its preacher, or in him was called forth by opposition; for his message to the world recognized Christ and Moses as messengers of God, whose law he himself was sent to fulfil; and many of his utterances breathe a gentler spirit than came to preponderate in his creed.

[1] In one of the medieval romances that so ignorantly abuse "Mahound" and his religion we hear of his preaching it out of spite at not being chosen Pope!

The thing hardest to get over in his story is the production of the Koran, which he professed to have revealed to him by an angel and dictated to be written down upon palm leaves, skins, or sheep's shoulder blades, which among several rude peoples have made tools for men of mystery. One has to suppose that, beginning with a sincere attempt to wean his country people from gross superstition, he was led on to work upon their indifference and bear out his mission by appeals to credulous wonder, half-dreamt and half-invented to serve the progressive needs of his ascendancy. Full of edification to believers, this farrago of native legends, reminiscences of Jewish and Christian scripture, wild fancies of his own, and practical commands or counsels, strikes Western readers as a heavy and shapeless mass, unworthy of an angelic author; but quite as absurd and duller is the Book of Mormon, which in our own time has commended itself to believers not more ignorant than Mohammed's disciples. Arabic scholars tell us that the language and the spirit of the Koran are alike hard to translate for unresponsive ears; yet at its best, as mere literature, it can never be compared with the raptures of Job or of Isaiah, that lose so little in the English of our Bible. The vein of inventing wonderful stories and imposing dogmas no doubt flowed more freely with practice; and spiritual power would lay snares to strangle honesty of purpose, as when the father of a sensual faith indulged himself with more wives than he allowed to common believers. Kindly judges who lay themselves out to belittle such blots of inconsistency as were recorded against Mohammed's character, should remember how ready reverent votaries would be to forget what could be said against one in whom the keenest critic will find it hard to discriminate the proportions of conscious deceit and self-delusion. The Prophet would have been more than man had he not given way to the temptations of power; and the mass of his followers soon showed how it was not the spiritual side of his teaching that appealed to them most strongly.

Round the deathbed of the Prophet were springing up seeds of dissension. Mohammed left no son. His daughter, Fatima, was married to Ali, his cousin and first convert, who might seem his natural successor. But family intrigues were at work, such as are multiplied by harem marriages. Ali, looked on askance as head of a proud family that had its ill wishers, was hated by the youngest and favourite wife, Ayesha, who long played a disturbing part in Moslem politics; and her father, Abu Bekr, now came to be chosen as Commander of the Faithful. His first task was to suppress rival prophets who put forward revelations of their own; then, to unite the strength of the believers, he turned their arms against neighbouring lands for that extraordinary career of conquest that has been already outlined.

We may summarize a history confused by the multiplicity and rapidity of its events and by the contradictory traditions throwing round them a halo of dubious romance. The conquerors peremptorily offered a choice of tribute, belief, or death; and many of the conquered were found ready to exchange the empire's yoke for one which could

not be more oppressive, while persecuted Christian heretics had some reason for considering the claims of a new creed. Khaled, "Sword of God", was the chief hero of Syrian wars, till death cut short his activity. Abu Bekr died after a short reign, nominating as successor the stern Omar, to whom it fell to build a mosque on the site of Solomon's temple. He made a masterful Caliph for nearly twelve years, but was then assassinated. In his place was elected Othman, another comrade of the Prophet, whose weakness, perhaps his virtues, provoked a rebellion in which he was killed (A.D. 655). Then at last Ali, hitherto set aside, became Caliph of the power whose discords at home had not hindered it from spreading its dominion almost as far as Alexander's.

But Ali had a competitor in Muaviah, or Moawiya, the first Moslem leader who launched forth upon the sea, attacking the islands of the Levant and defeating the emperor's fleet, which he might have followed up to Constantinople but for his ambition being diverted by Othman's death. He marched against Ali, professedly as avenger of Othman; then, instead of fighting out their quarrel, it was agreed to appeal to the Koran; and, pending a tardy decision, the antagonist Caliphs seated themselves, Muaviah at Damascus, Ali at Kufa, a new city built on the destruction of Ctesiphon. The latter had already put down a rebellion raised by Ayesha, whose lifelong hatred he magnanimously pardoned; but she came to a cruel end at the hands of Muaviah. Amru, the general who had won Egypt for Islam, also showed a disposition towards independence. To save the Moslem dominion from falling asunder, three fanatics conspired to murder all these three rival chiefs. The daggers of two went astray; but Ali was mortally stabbed in the mosque of Kufa (A.D. 661). His spiritless elder son, Hassan, let himself be pensioned off by Muaviah; the younger, Hosein, was slain later on in an attempt to vindicate his rights. Amru recognized Muaviah as Caliph, a title he was able to make hereditary in his family; and, whereas the first heads of this martial religion had been ostentatiously simple and austere after the example of its founder, this Ommiade dynasty, enriched by plunder, began at Damascus to surround itself with the pompous luxury of despotism. It came to be supplanted by another dynasty, the Abbassides, claiming descent from an uncle of Mohammed, which fixed its seat at Baghdad, to flourish famously there in the day of that "good Haroun Al Raschid", who was in fact by no means so good as he is painted in fiction. By his time the Caliphate had split into an eastern and a western power, the latter seated at Cordova, in Spain. There sprang up also a Fatimite Caliphate in Egypt, deriving itself from Fatima and Ali. Finally, another professed descendant of Ali, assuming the title of Shah in Persia, became head of the great Shiah schism that still divides the Moslem world. The doctrine they upheld was indeed older than the Shahs, but had died out in most other countries.

Those early struggles for spiritual and temporal dominion were the root of bitterness between Sunnite and Shiah, in Islam answering to

A CARAVAN OF PILGRIMS ON THE WAY TO MECCA. From the painting by Léon Belly in the Louvre at Paris.

It is the duty of every Moslem to make, if possible, one pilgrimage to Mecca during his life. This pilgrimage, known as the *hajj*, is made at one time of the Moslem year, namely, from the 7th to the 10th of the month Dhu'l-Hijja. The pilgrims travel in caravans, the two chief starting from Damascus and Cairo. "When the pilgrim arrives within five or six miles of the holy city, he puts off his ordinary dress after ablution and prayer, and puts on the two seamless wrappers which form the dress of the pilgrim, who goes without head-covering or boots or shoes. He must not shave at all, or trim the nails, or anoint the head, during the ceremonial period. The chief parts of the ceremonial are the visit to the sacred mosque, the kissing of the black stone, the compassing of the Kaaba seven times, three times running, four times slowly, the visit to the Maqam Ibrahim, the ascent of Mount Safa and running from it to Mount Marwa seven times, the run to Mount Arafat, hearing a sermon, and going to Muzdalifa, where he stays the night, the throwing of stones at the three pillars in Mina on the great feast day, and the offering of sacrifice there" (*Encyclopædia Britannica*). The *umra* or lesser pilgrimage is a religious visit to Mecca at any time accompanied by most of the ceremonies of the *hajj*.

This work is the masterpiece of the painter Léon Belly (1827–77), who specialized in Oriental scenes. It was first exhibited in 1867.

A CARAVAN OF PILGRIMS ON THE WAY TO MECCA

LÉON BELLY

the antagonism of Jew and Christian. The orthodox majority called Sunnites take their name from the Sunna, a body of traditional law which they receive as of authority in addition to the Koran. This is rejected by the Shiahs of Persia, whose faith, coloured by mystical sentiment, centres round what has come to be looked on as the martyrdom of Ali, and of his sons Hassan and Hosein, glorified by an apotheosis of fabulous sanctity. The memory of Hosein seems to shine brightest in this mythology, and his tomb at Kerbela, not far from ancient Babylon, has taken the place of Mecca in the veneration of pious Persians, whose bodies will be brought from far for burial in so sacred earth. The tomb of Ali at Nejef in the same region is also a place of devout pilgrimage like that of Mohammed at Medina. Among these Shiahs, in the Mohurram, first month of the Mohammedan year, is performed a kind of "Passion play" setting forth the tragedy of Hassan and Hosein, which unsympathetic readers find "intolerably tedious and dreary"; but as presented on the stage to the accompaniment of a long-drawn chant it stirs both actors and audience into such a frenzy that they "will sway and groan and weep and shout as though the things they saw were no acting, but the real sufferings of their martyred saints". Twelve Imams were beatified as successors of this house, the twelfth still to come in the Mahdi, whose pretensions to Messiahship from time to time have disturbed some precinct of Islam. In Persia the *Seyids*, or descendants of Ali, form almost an order of nobility, distinguished by their green turbans; all over the Moslem world, indeed, the progeny of the Prophet are held in honour; while to be a *Hadji*, as having duly performed the pilgrimage to Mecca, makes a title of respect.

Islam did not fail to engender heresies and sects, of which a hundred or so are counted. The Ommiade Caliphs cared more for power than for purity of belief; and the luxurious courts that succeeded the tents of desert warriors gave liberal patronage to letters and science when neglected by barbarous Christians; art also was fostered under the limitation of a horror of idolatry which spread into the Greek Church. The works of Aristotle came into special regard with learned Mohammedans, in some quarters subtilizing and broadening their faith. Eastern mysticism made a hotbed for sects such as the pantheistic Sufis of Persia. But development proves less at home than bigotry in this superstitious faith, which from time to time has been upheaved by some fresh eruption of the lurid force that gave forth more fire than light.

The most remarkable of such revivals was that of the Wahabis, excited in Arabia itself about the middle of the eighteenth century by the devout Abd-el-Wahab's preaching of what may be called a Puritan reformation, protesting against modern indifferentism, looking back to the original documents of the faith, insisting on its native austerity, denouncing the superstitions that had encrusted it, frowning at the pretentious architecture of mosques unhallowed by hearty worship, and going beyond the temperance of Mohammed to forbid the use of

tobacco as well as of wine. As in the original movement, conviction was urged by force of arms, and the political again overlaid the religious side of fanaticism. To the standard of this enthusiast Bedouin tribes once more rallied, till his followers became a formidable power, united in a state that at first had righteousness and orthodoxy for its device. Then the capture of Mecca roused opposition; and by Turkish pashas the Wahabis were driven back into the mountain region, where they still hold out, but split into two or three rival states, and losing the ardour that first inspired them. The Bedouin of the desert, for the most part, is not over much concerned about his religion, perfunctory in its prayers, sometimes keeping its fasts, but more readily its feasts, for which he provides by vowing to sacrifice a sheep or a camel at any perilous emergency; without mosques and mollahs he tends to relapse towards the heathendom from which he was stirred by the call of the Prophet. He even hates the Christian hardly more than the orthodox Osmanli, known to him as a despised oppressor.

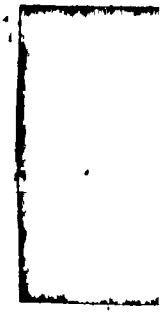
A century later than Wahabism a more gracious offshoot of Islam appeared in Persia as Babism, from its young teacher who announced himself as the Bab or gate of salvation, claiming to be the last in a series of manifestations of the divine. He and many of his followers were executed, under an apparently false charge of treason; but cruel persecution did not root out a community that became a great secret society, whose relations with the mass of believers seem much like those of the early Christians with the synagogue. The Bab's teaching was at a high level of enlightenment, exalting heartfelt piety, making little of form and ceremony, and taking a tolerant attitude towards the alien religions from which he had freely borrowed his own tenets. His spiritual heirs, like Mohammed's, fell apart into two sects, their leaders both exiled from Persia, one party soon to become almost extinct, but the other providing a succession of teachers who from their seat at Acre have so spread the doctrines of Babism as to win sympathetic attention in Christendom for the developed form of it known as Bahiism, while in the East converts may now be counted by millions. This seems a hopeful movement, very different from sullen rekindlings of Islam against the conquests of Western civilization, an angry smouldering spirit that may yet again burst into devastating flame, as it did around the Mahdi before whom Gordon fell at Khartoum. One mysterious organization of fanaticism is the Senussi brotherhood, hidden in Saharan oases, whence its missionaries steal all over Moslem lands.

Most of those rekindlings go to show how the original faith arose under favouring circumstances, through an ebullition of human nature crystallizing round the attractive masterfulness of some prophet whose teaching was not too high for the old Adam, and who was able to command fierce loyalty by leading his disciples to domination and plunder. Like other religions, it has produced its quota of saints and heroes; it has its special virtues, such as a patient resignation degraded into

lethargic fatalism, liberal almsgiving on principles not approvable by the Charity Organization Society, and a greater tenderness to animals than is noted on the Christian shores of the Mediterranean. To many heathen tribes it has proved a step in advance. By enquiring and instructed minds it has been sublimated into a liberal philosophy. But to the mass of its believers Mohammedanism is recommended as a simple form of obedience, more directed to ordinances and formularies than to aspirations, tuned rather to the sounding brass of bigotry than to sweet strains of charity, and giving free play to the antipathies of faith that come so natural in unregenerate man. Its lack of spiritual energy and of expansiveness makes this hard creed a curse rather than a blessing in the long run. It acts as a sedative to the conscience and a stimulus to the passions. Its sensual hopes and fears too easily deceive the heart. Its frame of formal observances stifles a growth which at first may be fostered by its warmth. Its sluggish submission lends itself as an instrument for tyranny. Whatever may have been the conception of its unlettered Prophet, who began every chapter of the Koran with an invocation of divine mercy and compassion, it grew to be a religion of pride, not of sorrow, one which has appealed to lustful warriors rather than to the weary and heavy laden of spirit, and which has never exerted itself to ennoble the sympathies of woman, "last at the cross and first at the grave" of Christ. So Moslem domination almost everywhere shows itself a rusty fetter upon human progress.

Baghdad, Cairo, and Cordova might preserve some treasures of ancient learning through the Dark Ages; and in some quarters, as in Spain, the Saracens left memorials of what was then a higher civilization than they destroyed. But more in keeping with the general effect of Islam's conquest seems its reputed burning of the great library at Alexandria. It came like a scorching lava torrent, sometimes indeed softening to rich soil that would foster new culture, vigorous for a time. Rome had spared the religion and the institutions of its vassals, adopting their arts and accomplishments to adorn its own triumphs. Christianity had absorbed the learning, the virtues, even some of the beliefs of paganism. But where the Crescent shone it was oftener in a darkened heaven, upon an earth blighted by ruin and decay.

Such was the new power that through the next age would, around the Mediterranean, strive on equal terms with the faith now dominant in the West.



# APPENDIX

## CHRONOLOGICAL CONSPECTUS OF EUROPEAN HISTORY

## GREAT MOVEMENTS OF EUROPEAN HISTORY

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